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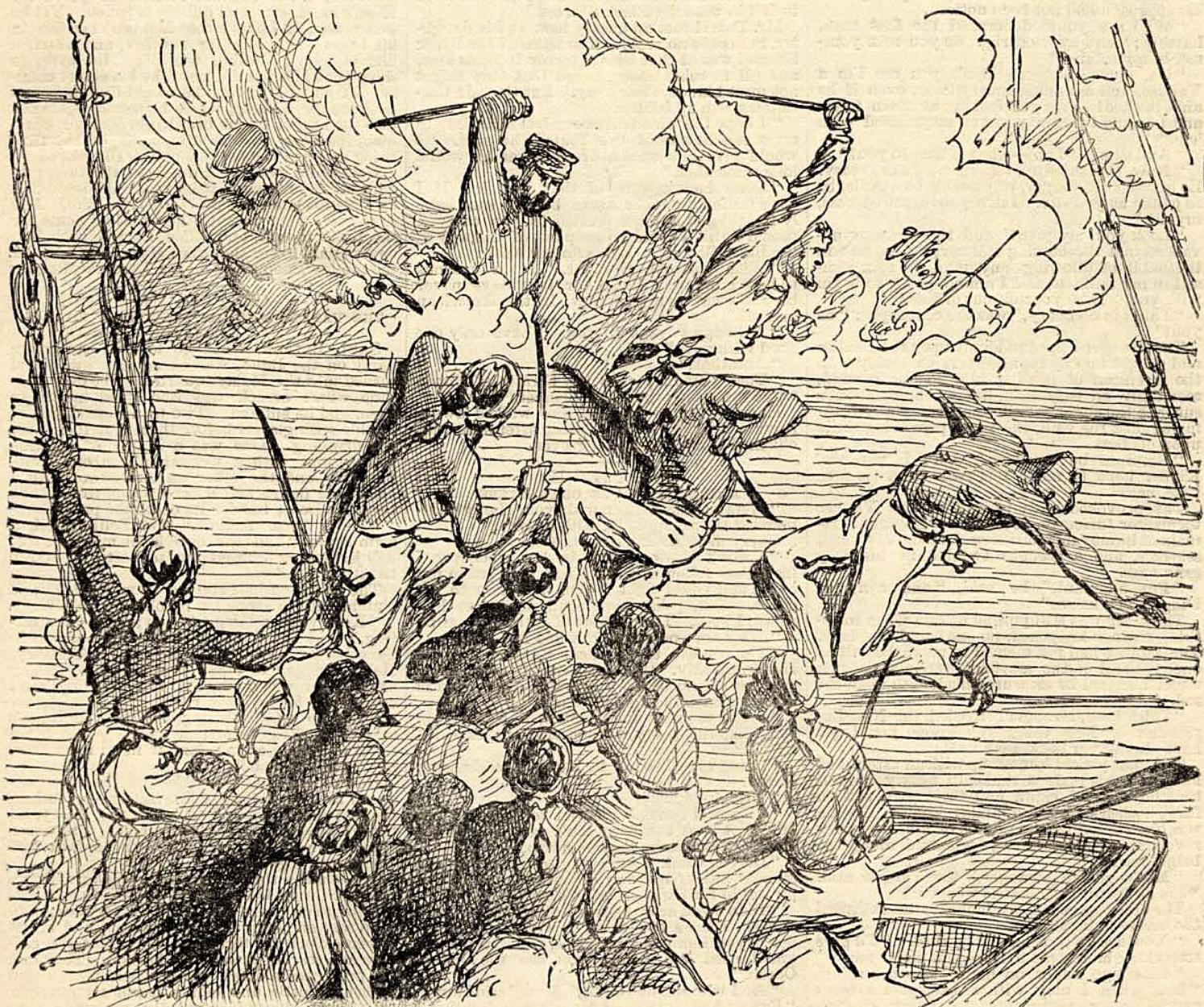
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No. 230.

THE YANKEE RAJAH; or, THE FATE OF THE BLACK SHEREFF.

BY C. DUNNING CLARK,

AUTHOR OF "EAGLE EYE," "MUTE CHIEF," "GRAYLOCK, THE GUIDE," ETC., ETC., ETC.



"GIVE IT TO THEM, BOYS!" CRIED THE YOUNG CAPTAIN. "REMEMBER THAT YOU FIGHT FOR YOUR LIVES; THE BLACK SHEREFF SPARES NONE."

The Yankee Rajah;

OR,

The Fate of the Black Shereef.

A TALE OF THE MALAY SEAS.

BY C. D. CLARK,

AUTHOR OF "EAGLE EYE," "MUTE CHIEF,"
"GREYLOCK THE GUIDE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE BUND—A STRANGE YANKEE.

A MAN in a dress half European and half Malay stood upon the European Bund in Shanghae, lounging in an indolent manner against the wall of a building. In person he was tall, strongly built, and strikingly handsome, but with a lurking devil looking out of his bright black eyes, which were fixed upon a party seated on a bench, their attention directed to the harbor. They were three in number—a gentleman somewhat past the middle age, a handsome young man with a seafaring air, and a beautiful girl, just budding into womanhood. The man who stood alone never moved his eye from the group, and as he gazed the demoniac look in them grew more and more marked.

"Have your own way for the present, Harry Castleton," he muttered; "my time is not so very far off."

"Kinder interested in that party, ain't ye?" remarked a quiet voice at his elbow.

He turned quickly and saw a slightly-built man of uncertain age leaning against the wall not far away. He had come up so quietly that his approach had not been noticed.

"Who are you?" demanded the first man, harshly; "and by what right do you mix yourself in my affairs?"

"Oh, now, stranger! Don't you see I'm a Yankee, and a Yankee must bite in, even if he ain't invited! I see you looking at them folks, and I thought mebbe you was acquainted with 'em."

"And suppose I am—what is that to you?"

"Now, don't rile up, stranger. Take it easy. Be gentle with me; or, ef ye can't be gentle, be as gentle as you can. I'm a good-natured cuss, myself."

"Look you, my man!" and the stranger advanced in a threatening manner; "I am not in the habit of allowing any man to mix himself in my business, and I am not going to begin with you. Take yourself out of this."

"I ain't in no hurry," was the cool reply; "be you?"

The stranger leaped suddenly upon the Yankee and caught him by the shoulders, evidently with the intention of hurling him to the ground, seemingly an easy task, but to the assailant's surprise the slightly built man remained leaning against the wall, the same provoking smile upon his face.

"Seem to be anchored, don't I, pardner? Kinder hard to move this rock from its firm base, hey?"

The provoked man tugged at this Yankee tormentor furiously, but the New-Englander remained immovable, a merry look on his hard, set face, and a peculiar twinkle in his deep gray eyes.

"I'm adamant," he said, "and can't be budged, you know."

The other was still pulling at him when something strange happened, no one could say how. The Yankee had not seemed to move, but all at once the feet of the assailant were struck from under him and he measured his length upon the sod.

"Take keer, stranger!" bawled the New-Englander. "Fust thing you know you'll get hurt—break yer back, may be!"

The man picked himself up with an astonished look, gave his body a shake to satisfy himself that he was all right, and then, in a sudden fury, flashed out a long Malay kreeese. But he was confronted by the muzzle of a heavy navy revolver and a resolute eye gleamed along the bright barrel.

"Might go off, stranger," the Yankee said. "It's an awful treacherous weapon."

The other gave a short laugh as he returned the kreeese to its sheath.

"You are a cool hand," he said. "I'd give something handsome to have you under me."

"I don't go under no man," was the reply. "but, when I play with a sarpint I always carry strong argymnts under my clothes. What did ye pitch into me that way fur?"

"Never mind. Perhaps you do not know me, and for that reason cannot be aware of the

danger you are in. It don't make much difference now, but some day I'll remind you of this thing."

He touched the fez he wore, after the manner of the naval salute, and walked up to the party on the benches, leaving the Yankee standing with his back to the wall in the same careless attitude.

"Oh, mortal fathers, ain't he tough!" muttered the queer fellow. "I guess he wouldn't have put that kreeese through my midriff if I hadn't produced the barker—oh no! Now let's watch his little game."

The stranger saluted the young lady first, by removing his cap, and then turned to the oldest of the two gentlemen.

"You are leaving the country, Mr. Darrel?"

"Yes, Captain Manton, I have spent the best years of my life here, and now, for my daughter's sake, I must go home."

"You take passage with Captain Castleton, do you not?"

"Yes; we have only been waiting until he sailed."

The young man sitting next to the lady said something to his companion in a low tone; the girl smiled, and again that ugly look came into the eyes of Captain Manton. He stood tapping his boot nervously with a light bamboo cane which he carried, and his eye measured his distance from Castleton as if taking ground for sword-play.

"I hope you may get home, safely," he said, with his cynical laugh, "but, really, there is a great deal of danger upon these seas now."

"I suppose you mean from the Malays?" Castleton remarked.

"Not so much as others. Suppose you were to fall in with the Black Shereef."

Mr. Darrel cast an uneasy look at his daughter, but made no reply. The name of the Black Shereef was at that time a terror in these seas, and all merchantmen prayed that they might not meet him on their way. But Captain Castleton spoke up boldly:

"I hope the piratical scoundrel will dare to cross the hawse of the Tokio," he said. "I would give him such a drubbing as he would long remember."

"Don't be too sure of that, captain. If I were sailing a merchantman, bearing such lovely freight and so much wealth as you carry, I should do all I could to keep out of the way of the Black Shereef. When do you sail?"

"With the ebb to-night. I am anxious to be on my way home, for teas have never been higher than just now, in the American market."

"A happy voyage to you. I have only one good wish now."

"And that?"

"That you may pass the Straits of Sunda without meeting the Black Shereef."

He turned upon his heel and walked away, leaving Harry Castleton glaring after him, with clinched hands and flashing eyes.

CHAPTER II.

A GLANCE AT OUR CHARACTERS.

"WHAT is the matter with you, Harry?" demanded the young lady, with a laugh.

Harry drew a long, deep breath.

"I don't know why it is, but whenever I meet that fellow I wish I had a sword in my hand, and could fight it out with him to the death. But, pshaw; we shall never see him again, I hope. Let us think of getting aboard."

"Why are you uneasy?" asked Mr. Darrel.

"I don't like that fellow, Manton," replied Harry, quickly. "Strange as it may seem, I feel as if we should be more safe if he remained in this port until the Tokio had sailed."

At this moment the Yankee, who had been watching the party with observant eyes, came up to them.

"Going to sail soon?" he inquired, addressing Harry.

"Yes; to-night."

"I s'pose I couldn't git you to listen to me, but if it was me I wouldn't go through the Straits of Sunda on the home trip."

"Do you think I am going to run a hundred leagues out of my way because there is talk of pirates in the Straits?" cried Harry.

"Didn't you hear me say I didn't s'pose you'd listen? There's one thing I will say, though: don't you hamper your guns, for like enough you'll need 'em before you see the Indian Ocean."

"And who might you be, friend?" said Harry. "I've had so much good advice to-day that I am not hungry for any more. Attend to your own business and I will attend to mine."

"That's all right," returned the Yankee, with

a grin. "I don't blame you for getting riled; you've had enough to make you, when that p'izen, long-geered, piratical shark of a Manton has just crossed your hawse. Look out fur that villain, whatever you do!"

"The man means well, Harry," said Mr. Darrel. "I am sorry we cannot take his advice, but I thank him all the same."

"You are a gentleman, sir. I'd do anything for you, or the handsome miss here, but I can't explain. Perhaps the time will come when I can help you, and when it does, sing out for Saul Belton, and Saul Belton will be on deck."

Without another word he hurried away and was lost among the narrow streets beyond the Bund.

Mr. Darrel was an American who had spent nearly fifteen years in Shanghae and had grown rich in the tea business. As it became plain that so much of his life must be spent there he had sent for his wife and little daughter and for twelve years Ellen had lived in the European quarter of the great Chinese port—Mrs. Darrel having died however two years before the opening of our story.

Harry Castleton had started as cabin boy on board one of the company's ships, and now he was part owner and master of the Tokio.

Who Captain Manton was no one could say. He often ran into port in his beautiful schooner, to refit, but he never took out a cargo. Those who claimed to know him said he was a gentleman of leisure, whose one delight was the life of a sailor. During the last year he had been a great deal in Shanghae, and had haunted the Darrel house until Harry, who was betrothed to Ellen, began to get uneasy. He was satisfied, however, when Captain Manton proposed for Ellen's hand, and was quietly rejected. Yet he had reason to believe that Manton cherished in his heart the desire for revenge, and watched him closely. Nothing was done, however, to show that Manton did not take his defeat calmly. From time to time he would disappear and be gone for months, when he would again sail into the harbor on his beautiful schooner to remain perhaps two months, most of his time being spent in the cottage of Mr. Darrel.

Harry did not like him from the first, perhaps for the reason that he was well aware that an attempt had been made to rival him. And so matters went on until the time had come for the Tokio to sail, and Ellen Darrel with her, never again to see the green shores of China or the motley assemblage on the European Bund.

CHAPTER III.

THE YANKEE AND HIS FRIENDS—A VILLAIN BAFFLED.

SAUL BELTON, when he left the American party on the Bund, walked rapidly away and turned into the Malay quarter. The door of a shop where arrack was sold stood invitingly open, and he entered. Two men were sitting at a table with glasses before them, but they were not drinking. One was a Malay of gigantic proportions, with a wonderfully strong, resolute face and the other an American, with a handsome figure and a face which would have been handsome but for its deathlike pallor.

"He is here, Arthur," said Belton, with a grim smile, "and the cuss is in mischief, too; he's jest laying himself out to destroy another beautiful girl."

The pale man half started from his seat and clutched at the butt of a revolver in his belt.

"Keep your setting, Arthur; keep your setting," said the Yankee, laying his hand upon the other's shoulder. "Jest look at the Malay. He's as hungry to climb that skunk of misery as you ever was and he knows the time ain't come yet. So he keeps cool."

"I have waited long years for vengeance's sake," hissed the other pale man.

"And the time ain't fur off now; meantime, let's hold a confab."

He took a seat at the table and the three engaged in a whispered conversation—or rather, the two Americans did so, while the Malay, although he seemed to listen intently, said not a word. Then they paid for the arrack and went away together.

In the mean time, night had come on and preparations were being made in the Darrel cottage to go on board the Tokio. Everything had been sent on board through the day, and about eleven o'clock the three stepped out of the cottage and started toward the harbor. They had not proceeded a dozen yards when there came a shrill whistle and half a dozen men sprung upon them. So sudden was the onslaught that Harry had no time to draw a weapon before he was in the grasp of two strong men with whom he struggled desperately. Before he could cry

for help all three were dexterously gagged with long cloaks, which were thrown over their heads and wrapped about them in many folds.

"Bind them," muttered a hoarse voice in the Malay tongue; "I'll take care of the girl."

He raised Ellen, still muffled in the cloak, when there came a ringing cheer and out of the darkness appeared a party of men who charged the assailants without a moment's hesitation. The scoundrel holding Helen in his arms dropped his burden and drew a kreebe, but before he could use it he received a blow which staggered him. As he reeled back he shouted something to his men in an unknown tongue, and they sprang away in the darkness and disappeared, followed as quickly by their leader.

"Let the skunks run," said a cheerful voice which they recognized at once as that of the stranger Yankee Belton. "We don't want them now. Better see you safe to your boat, I reckon, Capt'n Castleton."

"You will do me a great favor," replied Harry. "By George, old fellow, you were just in time, and I beg your pardon for what I said not long ago.

"Don't mention it. Me and my mates happened along this way, and of course I couldn't stand by and see a feller countryman abused by these yer heathen. That's right; stand up. Ain't hurt any, are ye?"

"Not a bit," replied Harry. "Who are these men with you?"

"Friends of mine—don't notice 'em. One's a dummie, and couldn't answer, an' the other wouldn't if he could. Are ye all right, Mr. Darrel?"

"Yes, yes; I do not know how to thank you, sir."

"Then don't fool away your time trying it on, 'cause it ain't no use. Keep your weepons handy, fur them ugly heathen might take it into the' heads to try the game over, durn 'em."

They walked rapidly down the Bund, a giant Malay and a tall, silent white man following like shadows, and reached the water side. Harry stopped and gave a signal whistle.

"Ay, ay, sir," cried a hearty voice; "here is the boat."

The speaker appeared suddenly upon the wharf and came toward them. Saul Belton started and looked closely at the new-comer in the moonlight. Then he touched Harry on the arm and drew him aside.

"Who is that chap?" he asked, in a low voice.

"His name is Will Wescott, and he is my third mate," replied Harry.

"Known him long?"

"No; I shipped him yesterday."

"Where did you pick him up?"

"Our agents recommended him to me and he is every inch a sailor. What do you mean?"

"Waal, I can't say. That's something in the critter's voice, I dunno what it is, that don't suit me. Sounded like a chap I used to know but I ain't seen him for some time. Reckon he's gone under, probably. He was a tough cuss, that one, and his name was Tom Reid. But come to look clust he didn't have no sech baird as this one."

"I consider myself lucky in getting him. Will you go on board with us?"

"I calculate not. Fust, 'cause I ain't got the time, and second, 'cause I've got to be out of this afore you sail."

"Have you got a boat here?"

"I've got a way of gittin' out and probably you'll hear on me ag'in. I couldn't coax you to take the long trip home, could I, hey?"

"I should not consider that I had done my duty to my partners if I did that. My ship is well armed, I've got a splendid crew, and I am not afraid of all the pirates in the China seas."

"Oh, all right, all right; waal, I must be trottin' Shake hands with the old man afore ye go. Good-by, Mr. Darrel; hope I'll see ye in Batavia, I do, ef I git thar afore ye. Good-by, Miss Ellen; don't forget the old Yankee. Sakes alive; I used to hev a little sister to hum that was jest about your figger, and ef it wa'n't fur thet I dunno ez I'd hev taken so much trouble."

They stepped into the boat, which shot away at once under the strong strokes of the oarsmen, and the Yankee whistled a tune softly as he watched them.

"Tell you what, Arthur," he said, "that Harry Castleton is a mighty good boy, but he's awful headstrong. Mebbe he'll l'arn wisdom as the years go rollin' by. Hush up—and git."

The three men slipped away just in time, for half a dozen men came hurriedly down the Bund and looked after the receding boat.

"She has escaped me for the time being," said one, who appeared to be the leader, in a

low voice. "Curse that Yankee; but for him, all would have been well."

"All shall be well yet, Mighty Prince," replied a voice, in the Malay tongue.

"Hush," replied the other, fiercely. "Not my name or title here, for you know what would happen if we were betrayed. Make the signal."

One of the men bent over the wall of the Bund, and a green light flashed for a moment across the water and disappeared. A few moments later the dip of oars was heard, and a large boat shot up to the place, the whole party embarked and were pulled out into the stream. Not a word was spoken as they glided on under the bows of the Tokio, the decks of which were lighted and every preparation being made for sailing. A moment later a savage laugh broke from the shut teeth of the tall man in the stern sheets of the boat.

"They think they have escaped me," he muttered. "Well—we shall see."

After a half hour's pull they rounded to under the side of a beautiful felucca which lay at anchor in the stream. The men sprung aboard, and, after giving an order to the officer in charge of the deck, the leader went below. Half an hour later the beautiful craft was slipping out of the river heading for the open sea. She passed the forts without the usual signal, and, once clear of them, spread her wings and went flying on over the waves with marvelous speed, leaving the shores of China rapidly behind.

CHAPTER IV. ELLEN'S SUSPICIONS—THE BLACK SHEREEF IN SIGHT.

As morning broke the Tokio was well out to sea, walking the water with a grace only seen in shipping which slides on Yankee keels. She was a beautiful ship, and it is no wonder that Harry Castleton was proud of her. Ellen was on deck, enjoying the balmy air, and looking back toward the shores which she was leaving behind her forever. Harry, leaving the charge of the ship to the first mate, was by her side.

A man stood in the waist not far from them, issuing orders to some of the hands who were working in the maintop. He was a good looking fellow, perhaps thirty-five years of age, with a full beard covering the lower part of his face. Ellen looked at him closely.

"That is the man Wescott, whom Mr. Belton warned you against," she said to Harry. "I am sorry he is on board the Tokio."

"Oh, he is all right," said Harry. "It isn't often you can pick up such a man as that when you are short of officers. I wish I had forty such men in my crew."

The man was now shouting to the hands in the lee shrouds, and his voice had the true sailor ring. Ellen watched him intently.

"I don't know how it is, but when I look at that man I think of a treacherous tiger. I hope nothing evil may come from his being on board."

Harry laughed lightly, and the conversation turned to something else, and the shores of China faded from view as the good ship stood out to make an offing. Mr. Darrel came up and joined them on the quarter-deck.

"What do you say to the advice of that strange fellow who wanted us to take the longest route, Harry?"

"I am not going to do it," was the somewhat testy reply. "I've three passengers at Batavia, and even if I had not, the Tokio is not going to run for all the pirates in the China seas. You wouldn't have me do that, Mr. Darrel?"

"I don't know. The man seemed to be in earnest and went out of his way to do us a service. 'The longest way round' is often 'the shortest way home.'"

"It cannot be done," replied Harry. "I've got forty good men on my decks and carry guns enough to clean out all the pirates who dare attack us, and could show them a clean pair of heels in any event."

"Hush," said Ellen, quickly.

As she spoke Wescott walked slowly by them on his way aft. There was a peculiar glitter in his dark eyes which the girl did not like.

"I am satisfied that the third mate was listening to what you were saying, Harry," she said, when the man had passed.

"Suppose he was, Nellie. You are unreasonable in your aversion to poor Wescott."

"Perhaps I am, but if I have any secrets I don't want him to hear them," she answered, pouting.

The Tokio kept steadily on her course, and on the morning of the third day they were nearing the coast of Borneo, that strange island, as yet

so little known to civilized man. Ned Stacey, the first mate, cast a sweeping glance along the horizon and sprung down into the cabin.

"I would like to see you on deck, captain," he said, quickly.

Harry followed the mate on deck and Ned pointed out three different sail upon the horizon. Even at that distance the young man could make out the peculiar rig of the Malay ships.

"Don't like their looks, captain," said Stacey. "Nonsense," interposed William Wescott. "I haven't a doubt that they are as honest craft as we are."

Stacey turned a quick look upon the man's face.

"You are third mate of the Tokio, ain't you, Mr. Wescott?"

"Yes," he answered, angrily.

"Then attend to your duty and let me do mine. I never want a man to stick his spoon into my dish unless I ask him."

Wescott answered by a single ominous flash of his dark eyes as he walked away, and Harry sprung into the cabin for a glass. For ten minutes he watched the three sails intently, and then turned to Stacey, who was doing the same thing.

"What do you say, Ned?"

"Bad; looks fishy; them's Malay proas."

"I am of your opinion. They may be all right, but I don't like their looks. Pipe all hands."

The shrill call of the bos'n's pipe rung through the ship, and the watch below came tumbling on deck, ready for business. A whisper of danger passed through the ship, but not a man blenched.

Mr. Darrel came hastily on deck and approached Harry.

"What is it, my boy?" he said, in a hurried tone.

"Keep Ellen below," was the reply. "I fear that we are going to have a fight."

The proas rose rapidly, and at the same moment there fluttered out from the gaff of each a black flag, with a red serpent coiled in the middle.

"The Black Shereef," whispered the old sailors. "We are doomed men!"

CHAPTER V.

THE GUNS SPIKED — A BRAVE BATTLE — THE ABDUCTION OF ELLEN — THE MYSTERIOUS FRIEND.

No one save those who had long sailed these seas could know the fear inspired by the name of this well known sea rover. For ten years he had infested the narrow seas and his flag had become a terror to peaceful merchantmen. Even the few who had ever escaped from his merciless hand had never seen his face or could say what manner of man he was. He did not know the name of pity, and the men that yielded to him were doomed. There was no thought of yielding on the part of Harry Castleton, and his voice rung out cheerily:

"Clear away the guns," he cried, heartily. "We'll teach these lubbers that they have no easy prey in the Tokio, and tow the black wretch into the first port."

"Away you go," shouted Ned Stacey, infected by the gallantry of his loved commander. "We'll fight while a plank swims."

But there was no escape, if they thought of slipping through. A large proa lay off the starboard-quarter, a second off the beam, and one on the port bow, and all were closing in rapidly; and, even as they gazed, there shot out from a projecting headland another villainous-looking craft, with the flag of the sea rover fluttering on high.

"Oh, see 'em come," growled Ned Stacey. "That's what they call fair fighting, I suppose; four to one."

"Get out the ammunition," replied Harry. "I'll see to the small arms, Mr. Eason!"

The second mate came forward quickly and saluted.

"I believe you are a gunner, Mr. Eason?" asked the captain.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"You will act in that capacity then. See that the guns are ready for use quickly, and station the crew. You have no time to lose."

There were six serviceable guns on deck, but so rapidly did Gilbert Eason work, that in twenty minutes the crew were at their stations, stripped to the waist, and grimly waiting for orders. The ammunition was passed up and the Tokio ready for action.

"Head her for those fellows on the starboard bow," cried Harry. "If we can break through we will show them the neatest running fight you ever heard of."

The Tokio was very swift and rapidly neared the proas, and they could see the decks black with men—Malays, Papuans and Sooloos, wild for blood, and shaking their weapons in the air. "Are you ready, Mr. Eason?" cried Harry. "If you are, give them a shot."

Eason sighted the gun with his own hand, rose with a smile upon his face and applied the match. Scarcely had he done so, when, with a cry of rage, he sprung forward and looked at the guns.

"Spiked, by—!"

The imprecation might be forgiven an old sailor at that moment. The gun had been cunningly spiked by forcing a "rat tail" file into the touch-hole, and breaking it off. A rapid glance showed that every gun on board had been served in the same way.

"By Heaven!" cried Harry, "we have a traitor here. Cutlasses and pistols, lads, and if we must die, let us die like Yankee sailors, with our teeth set."

"Run down the proa," shouted Ned Stacey. "Every man to the bow."

The men grasped the weapons passed to them, and the great ship, flying before the fresh sailing breeze, and gathering way as she came, appeared to be steering for the open water between the two proas bearing down upon the bows, the pirates shouting like demons as they came. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, the course of the ship changed and she met the swift proa, bows on. There was a shock and the pirates swarmed into the chains only to be hewed down by the sailors, and the proa sunk like a stone, just as the second fastened on her chains and her crew prepared to board.

Then ensued one of those fierce battles of which we have no conception. The Malay fights because he loves it; death has no terrors for him, as according to his creed it only opens the way into paradise, which his priests tell him awaits the valiant warrior.

With wild, resounding cheers, they clambered up the sides of the Tokio, but they were met by men as valiant and determined as they; for, say what you will, only the enduring Anglo-Saxon knows how to fight with stubborn valor, not knowing when he is beaten.

In the front of his men, wielding his cutlass gallantly, and cutting down every yellow Malay or brown Sooloo who showed his face above the rail, fought Harry Castleton, doing the work of three men. By his side, with a revolver in each hand, stood Mr. Darrell, and three times his unerring hand had laid low a man whose weapon was turned against Harry Castleton, when the brave young captain was engaged with another enemy in his front.

"Give it to them, boys!" cried the young captain. "Remember that you fight for your lives; the Black Shereef spares none."

The men answered by resounding cheers, and their blows fell fast and furious. The Malays, not accustomed to such stubborn resistance, began to falter, and the men of the Tokio cast off the grappling irons which clung to the chains.

"Now where is that Will Wescott?" cried Ned Stacey. "He's a skulker, that chap."

As he spoke the third mate appeared, leaped upon the rail, and hurled himself headlong upon the deck of the proa, shouting some words in an unknown tongue. He had scarcely reached the deck when the proa drifted astern, and then, too late, Harry Castleton saw that the wretch bore in his arms the senseless form of Ellen Darrel.

"You false-hearted hound," cried Harry raising his revolver, "you came here to betray us."

With a mocking laugh Wescott raised the form of the senseless girl and held it before him as a shield.

"Why don't you fire?" he shouted in a jeering tone. "You seem to hesitate, my dear captain. Yes, I spiked the guns of the Tokio, and I have won the prize which alone is worth more to us than the ship. I am Tom Reid, lieutenant of the Black Shereef. Ha! ha! ha! You were nicely fooled."

He turned to the crew of the proa and shouted an order. As he did so the sails went up, the head of the proa fell off, and she began to run on a course parallel with that of the Tokio, while the long gun amidships was brought so bear upon the great ship.

"Give me a rifle, Ned," said Harry. "They must not fire that gun yet."

Ned ran up with a rifle in his hand, just as a tall Malay sprung forward to fire the gun. Harry pulled the trigger and the villain sprung into the air and fell dead.

"Give me a Winchester," said Harry. "I will make them pass a bitter time before they

fire that gun. Give the men muskets, Ned, and send them into the tops. We sail three fathoms to their two and will soon be out of their clutches."

A terrible fusilade was opened upon the proa. Never, in all their fighting, had they been exposed to the aim of American repeating rifles, and they dropped, man by man, on the deck of the proa, under the deadly shower. Reid saw that he was losing men to no purpose and changed his course, running in toward the land, knowing well that Harry would not dare to follow him there. A glance at the other proas revealed the fact that they were closing in fast, and a shot which splashed in the waves close under the stern of the Tokio admonished the young captain that it would be utter madness to pursue.

"God help her," he groaned. "I can do no more. We must save the ship and trust to other means to rescue Ellen."

Right astern, as the ship flew on over the rising sea, thundered a fast-sailing proa, more than the equal of the Tokio in speed. The second shot from her long gun came whistling over the rail, killed a man on the 'gallant forecastle, and grazed the foremast in its course. At the same time a shout from Mr. Eason announced that he had managed to clear one of the guns, and it was trained upon the proa astern. The first shot, well aimed, swept her decks from stem to stern, knocked the wheel into fragments, and the craft began to yaw and steer wildly, while the Tokio gained hand over hand. The second shot struck the foremast, and it came crashing down, leaving the proa wallowing, a helpless wreck, upon the heaving sea.

"Well done, Eason; well done, old boy," cried Harry, running aft. "Don't waste any more shots upon him, but attend to these fellows on the starboard quarter. What's that, Ned?"

"By George, the boys have got the spike out of another gun."

"Good for them. Head up a little and meet these fellows half-way. Let us once get them astern and we can laugh at them."

The proas came booming on, their crews wild with rage, and were closing in fast upon the Tokio, their guns making sad havoc with her rigging as they came. Eason answered as well as he could, and succeeded in crippling the leading proa, but the larger of the two was now so close that another battle seemed inevitable, when there came darting out of the sea, close under the bows of the ship, a strange cigar-shaped object, which darted with inconceivable rapidity at the proa, and disappeared in the waters. There was wild confusion on board the pirate, and all their efforts seemed bent upon escaping, if they could. The proa fell off suddenly and headed seaward, when she was seen to heave up out of the water until her keel was visible, and revealed a gaping rent, into which the water rushed with a gurgling sound. A moment more, and she was gone.

"A torpedo, by heavens," cried Harry. "What can it mean?"

As he spoke the strange craft again appeared for a moment upon the surface and plunged into the waves close to the crippled proa. A moment later her crew were seen to hurl themselves desperately into the sea, the same dull explosion followed, and the proa was gone.

"Hurrah!" cried Ned Stacey, drawing a long breath. "That fellow came just in time and I don't think they will trouble us any more."

Just then the strange torpedo sprung into view again and came racing by under the stern of the Tokio. They had time to see that she was about fifty feet in length, shaped like a gigantic cigar, and they could hear the clicking of machinery as she sped by, and there came fluttering on board an arrow, which lodged in the mainmast. The boat disappeared.

"There's a letter on the arrow, captain," said Ned Stacey.

"Give it to me," cried Harry.

He tore open the paper and read:

"Ellen Darrel is the prey of the Black Shereef, but he will not harm her now. Head to the south and before you have sailed a dozen leagues you shall hear from—

A FRIEND."

"Our only hope is in him," said Harry, sadly. "We must take his advice."

And with sad hearts they headed the Tokio on her course, leaving Ellen Darrel in the hands of the pirate chief.

CHAPTER VI.

SAUL BELTON ON DECK.

THE Tokio sailed on to the south.

Harry Castleton could scarcely have said

why he did this, for it was far from his intention to desert his betrothed. But he wanted time to think, and consult with Mr. Darrel as to the best course to pursue. The officers of the ship gathered in a sad group on the quarter deck, while the men busied themselves in clearing away the wreck, taking care of the bodies of their fallen comrades, and attending to the wants of the wounded.

The young man, although almost broken-hearted, tried to console the bereaved father.

"These Malays always hold their prisoners for ransom," he said, "and—"

"Why do you say that, Harry, when you know well that the man who captured her was no Malay?"

"But he is a renegade American in the service of the Black Shereef. I have heard it said that he has many such sailing under his flag."

"I have little hope in that," was the sad reply. "My only hope is that we may find an American man-of-war at Batavia, and some means may be adopted to rob these villains of their prey."

"Sail bo!" cried the look-out.

Harry sprung on the rail and leveled his glass on the sail indicated by the man on the foretop. He made her out a handsome schooner, running down to speak them. She rose rapidly and as she showed more plainly they saw that it was an American built schooner, with the clean run and tapering spars only seen in Yankee shipping, and that the American flag was flying at the gaff. Harry still kept his glass upon her, and suddenly fixed it upon the figure of a man who stood on the rail also with a glass in his hand. For a moment he was undecided, but as the schooner came booming on he recognized that remarkable Yankee who had aided them in Shanghai. Half an hour later he was close to the Tokio, and lowering a boat he came aboard with the coolest air imaginable, and shook hands with the Americans as if they had been old friends, and nothing particular had happened.

"Morning, capt'in," he said. "Been in a scrimmage, I judge. Maybe you don't remember I told you to take the longest way home, Capt'in Castleton."

"If we only had," groaned Harry.

"Sartin, sartin: most any one will holler after he gets hurt. Found the Black Shereef 'bout whar I judged you would, and had a lively time. Now I reckon you know how it is yourself."

"Were you in that strange craft that sunk the proas?"

"What craft?"

"Nonsense; you know all about it. Was it not you who sent me word that you would aid us?"

"Nary. Jest look at this dockyment."

He thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out a paper, upon which was written:

"To the Yankee Rajah:

"The ship Tokio has been attacked by the Black Shereef, off Borneo, and a young girl named Darrel made prisoner. Aid them as you would aid me."

"THE MYSTERY."

"That's the ticket. Now I know where that comes from and the writer thereof is jest pizen on Malays. He eats 'em for breakfast; on the half-shell; stewed, fried and steamed. In fact, Malay is his chief diet."

"And who are you? You gave your name as Saul Belton. But that does not explain your presence here."

"Mebbe you've heern tell of the Yankee Rajah?"

"I have," said Harry. "He owns a little island in the Spice group."

"That's me; I'm the chap that is monarch of that there island, and there ain't many sov'rins that has as complete control of their dominions. I spos'e you want to get the gal?"

"We will have her or die."

"That's hearty. I'm with you until the universal heavens turn green. That ar' leetle gal suited me, and I ain't a-going to leave her in the hands of that etarnal skunk. But we can't do anything with the Tokio; she's too 'tarnal big fur our work."

"But we may need her."

"Nary time. Sarcumvention is the word, and we'll beat the cusses yet. How many of your men will it take to sail her to Batavia?"

"Can we spare any of them?"

"I dunno as we kin. Say; I'll take the ship to my island and lay her up thar. That's the proper racket."

"Would it not be better to go to Batavia and get a man-of-war?"

"See here; do you want to run this thing yourself? If you do, I'll clear the way."

"I do not know what to do," replied Harry.

"Then trust me. Thar ain't a man in these parts, ef I do say it, that knows better how to tackle the Black Shereef than me."

"I trust you, then. We place ourselves entirely in your hands."

"All right, then! Here, Marco."

At his call a man came clambering out of the boat and reached the deck. Harry was forced to say, that, though of the yellow race, he was one of the most perfect specimens of manhood he had ever seen. He was about six feet and four inches in height, formed upon the model of a Hercules, straight as an arrow, with magnificent muscles and well-turned limbs.

"Marco is a Malay, and one who ain't got no love for the Black Shereef," said the Yankee Rajah. "Hey, Marco?"

At the mention of that name the eyes of the Malay began to roll wildly and his great hands opened and shut convulsively.

"You would like to get a whack at the Black Shereef, wouldn't you, Marco, old boy?"

A harsh guttural sound broke from the lips of the savage man and his face worked strangely.

"You see, Marco was his prisoner once," said the Rajah, in a matter-of-fact tone, "and the pisona skunk had his tongue cut out, just by way of amusement. Marco ain't forgot it, and only for me the Black Shereef would have been dead years ago."

"Why did you save such a wretch?"

"Waal, I'd got a use fur him, no matter what. I've got through with him now, though, and he may as well begin to dig his grave, when I let Marco loose on him. We are going to run the Black Shereef to earth, Marco."

The Malay fell upon his knees and pressed his forehead upon the hand of the Rajah.

"All right, my boy," he said. "I know you are hungry, and when he dies, I promise you he shall die by your hand."

The Malay mute uttered the same guttural cry and embraced the knees of his master.

"That's all right, old fellow," said Belton. "Jump into the boat and get back to the Wave Witch. Tell Jim Slocum to head for the island and show us the way. Then come back to me."

Marco sprung back into the boat and it shot away toward the schooner.

"Will your officers understand him?" asked Harry.

"They've got so used to his signs that they can read 'em like a book," was the answer. "You'll see."

As the boat neared the schooner Marco rose in the stern sheets and made some rapid signs. The men on board seemed to understand him, for the schooner at once filled away and the boat turned again toward the ship. Marco sprung on board and the boat pulled away to intercept the course of the schooner. They saw the crew get aboard, the boat was hoisted in and the schooner slipped away to the south west, the great ship following. Two days and nights passed, and on the morning of the third day they were threading the Spice islands, the schooner leading the way still. Now and then a proa shot out from the islands, but a look at the schooner seemed to satisfy them, for they at once ran back into harbor.

"They don't want to tackle me," chuckled the Rajah. "They know the old man; they've harnessed him before and know he's a hard hoss to ride. Keep your eye on the Witch, you at the wheel. Jim Slocum knows the islands and you don't."

The island which they sought now lay before them, but scarcely had they sighted it when Marco, who rarely left his master's side, touched him on the arm and made some rapid signs.

"Oh, git out," replied the Yankee. "They wouldn't dare to try it."

Marco only answered by pointing over the rail in the direction of the island.

"Ha!" cried the Rajah, after a moment of close inspection. "Give me a rocket, captain; I want to signal the schooner."

"No need of that," replied Harry. "She seems to be luffing now."

As he spoke the schooner came quickly up into the wind and lay rocking idly on the water. The Tokio held in her course until close under her bows, when the ship also luffed, and Marco, with Saul Belton and Harry, went on board the schooner.

"Ahoy!" cried the Rajah. "You Jim Slocum, signal the island, quicker than scat. You see them skunks, don't you?"

"Ay, ay, sir! Here comes the rockets," Slocum answered.

One of the crew came out of the cabin, carrying three strangely-shaped rockets. A whizzing sound was heard, followed by a loud explosion.

A moment later an answering sound came back from the island.

"That's O. K.," said the Rajah. "Them Malay skunks have plucked up courage and are laying for me under the pint of the island yander. I'll make 'em smell blue blazes in about six minnits by the clock. Ha! there they come, biling hot and smoking for war. Give 'em a serenade, Marco."

The Malay sprung to a beautiful pivot gun amidships—the only gun carried by the schooner—and trained it upon the coming proas, which suddenly shot out from the sheltering point, while at the same moment the flag of the Black Shereef was given to the breeze. No sooner had the eye of the mute glanced along the sights, then the sullen roar of the cannon was heard, and the conical shot tore its way along the crowded deck of the leading proa, causing dreadful slaughter.

"Serve 'em out, serve 'em out, Marco. Give 'em blue pills till they can't rest. No—hold on; there comes the Mystery!"

As he spoke the second proa was seen to tremble in every joint and then she began to settle by the head and filled quickly. Cries of dismay were heard aboard the other proas, as the strange craft called the Mystery rose out of the water near the sinking proa and with a strange hissing sound plunged headlong at the Malay craft which had received the shot from the long gun. With yells of fear the Malays forced the lug sails over on the other tack, but, before the wind could fill them, the pointed beak of the Mystery plunged into her side, tearing a gaping rent, into which the sea poured. Then the stranger craft backed away and sunk, and was only visible by a peculiar ripple on the water over the place where she went on her submarine way.

The third proa had got her lugs over and was slipping away with the wind over her quarter, and Marco contented himself with sending a single shot after her, which tore up the low bulwarks and chipped the mainmast.

"Let the sneaks go," said the Rajah. "Blame the skunks; they will know better than to run their noses into my cruising ground again, I reckon. Head her in, you at the wheel, and the Mystery will take care of herself."

CHAPTER VII.

THE YANKEE RAJAH AT HOME.

THE Mystery could only be traced on her submarine way by the ripple on the water, which showed that she was running close to the surface. Every one on board the Tokio was watching her course with great interest, for all felt that this strange craft would have much to do with the rescue of Ellen Darrel—if, indeed, she was to be rescued from the hands of the black-hearted villain who had taken her captive. When near the island the strange craft rose to the surface for a moment, as a whale rises to breathe. Before her was a rocky wall, which seemed to encircle the island, and to shut it out completely from the outside world. Harry saw her plunge straight against this wall and disappear.

"She is gone," he said.

"Reckon you'll see her again some day," said the Rajah, quietly. "The man that navigates her knows his biz on a raft, now mind I tell you. Ease her off a little, Garry; now you can make the harbor."

As the head of the schooner swung round they could see a narrow opening beyond the point, so narrow, indeed, that it seemed almost impossible for a heavy craft to enter. But the man at the wheel understood his business, and she shot in between two gigantic walls, higher than the masthead, followed by the Tokio, and the anchor went down in a beautiful little harbor, before what appeared to be quite a town.

"My realms, mates," said the Rajah. "You are welcome here."

They quickly landed, and the people came out to stare at them curiously.

Harry was completely taken aback as quite a number of the inhabitants were white people, and Americans at that, and the neatness of the houses, as well as the tasteful manner in which they were ornamented, proved that they had been here a long time and meant to stay.

"I wonder the Malays have left you here in peace," said Harry.

"They've tried to bite me on two several times, but they found me the toughest piece they ever attempted to masticate. Just take a walk with me, and I'll show you how we go to work to defend ourselves."

"We must not waste time. Remember that Nellie must be rescued at all hazards," Mr. Darrel.

"I've taken the contract and mebbe it's a big one, but I'll stand the racket and I never was known to bite off more than I could chew. You can't hate the Black Shereef any more than I do, and yet I will say I don't think he means to do the gal any harm now."

"I suspect Tom Reid of being the Black Shereef," interposed Harry.

"I don't; Tom Reid is mean enough, but he ain't the Shereef. Oh, Lord, no; not by no means. The Shereef is a hoss of another color. But come along, and I'll show you how I defend this island when it is attacked."

They turned to the right after leaving the village, and ascended the lofty bluff which rose on both sides of the harbor and completely surrounded the town. Upon the crest of this bluff on each side was a battery of three guns, so placed as to send a plunging fire upon the decks of any approaching craft, when it reached a certain point, over which it must pass to enter the harbor. A similar battery on the other side crossed fire with this. Below, upon a wide shelf, were two other guns, loaded with grape and canister. The rocky wall which encircled the valley in the rear was a regular fort, with guns mounted at intervals, and which could only be approached by steep paths, which could be swept by a terrible fire at any moment.

"And that ain't all," declared the Rajah. "The island is surrounded by shoals except on this side, and if they attack with proas it must be in front. And I've got torpedoes laid down in such a way that it would be mighty orkard for a ship manned by fellers that didn't know the ropes to get in here. I feel tolerable safe, and I only wonder that these fellers dare to approach my island. They wouldn't only they know that the Mystery and I are old friends, and they want to get at him through me."

"Who are these people with you?"

"The whites are Yankee sailors, who have got tired of the Old World and want to make a new home. The others are good fellers of all nations that I've picked up here and there, as the case might be. There ain't one of them that wouldn't get up and fight if I asked him to and even take a little risk of life or limb for my sake, and I'd do as much fur them."

"Where does the Black Shereef live?"

"He's over yonder," answered the Rajah, pointing toward the Papuan coast. "That's the trouble about him—he's easy enough to find, but most people think he's a Malay—but he ain't, durn his hide! I've only been waiting to get help enough, and now we won't rest until we hev wiped him and his gang off the face of the created airth; I hev sworn it."

And the Rajah raised his hand solemnly on high as he registered his vow.

CHAPTER VIII.

TOM REID'S ARRIVAL AT THE BLACK SHEREEF'S PALACE.

WE have seen Ellen Darrel a prisoner in the hands of the traitor, Tom Reid, and that his proa escaped from the strange craft, the Mystery.

The two proas which were left headed past the coast of Borneo, and Reid carried his insensible victim into the cabin and laid her on a couch. For a moment the man stood looking at her intently, with a lowering brow, and then went on deck.

"Where is the Shereef?" asked a tall Malay. "Why is he not here when his sons are beaten by the Spirit of the Ocean?"

"He ought to have been here before," answered Reid. "I don't know why he didn't come, but probably he thought we ought to be a match for the Tokio; and so we were if that thrice accursed torpedo had not come to help them."

"We cannot fight the Spirit of the Waves," declared the chief. "My blood turns to water when I think of him."

"I don't blame you much. Curse him, I wonder who he is?"

"He is a Barsakaw," replied the Malay. "The brood of the Malay are brave, but they know that he who strikes at the Barsakaw might as well waste his blows upon the empty air. But we have the white maiden; the Shereef will forgive us when he sees her."

"I'd have jumped overboard if I did not have her to take to him," averred Reid. "I wouldn't have been the one to go home empty-handed for a lac of rupees. Can you make out his sails?"

The chief shook his head.

"Then we may as well make for home. And see here; that cursed Yankee Rajah at Gadong Beg had something to do with this. He was in Shanghae with his schooner when we sailed, and

you know he goes like the wind. Some of these days we will take that island and kill every man on it."

"Our chief was wrong when he tore out Marco's tongue and then let him live. Marco will never forgive or forget, and he is the friend of the White Rajah."

"I'm sorry it was done at all," said Tom, uneasily. "But, what can you do with the Shereef when he gets a mad fit on? But, look here; you take care of the proa while I get some sleep for I have had a hard time during two or three weeks, and have actually had to work; and I am not used to it."

He rolled himself in a blanket and lay down in the bow, and the Malay, after setting a guard over the cabin door, took charge of the proa. When Ellen came to herself, and realized that she was a prisoner, she tried the cabin door, but it was fast and she turned to the stern window. The proa was moving on swiftly over a tranquil sea, and she could hear the measured tread of the sailors on deck and the soft footfall of the guard who paced to and fro before the cabin door. She remembered nothing since Reid came suddenly into the cabin of the Tokio and stupefied her by the use of some potent drug, the effect of which had hardly yet passed off. Then night came on, and she threw herself upon the couch for a little rest. When she awoke it was broad day again, and looking out of the cabin window, she was aware that the proa was at anchor in a sheltered harbor, surrounded by a dozen craft of the same kind. Just then the door opened, and Reid came in, fez in hand.

"Sorry I had to use you a trifle roughly yesterday, Miss Darrel," he said, respectfully, "but I was acting under orders."

"You are a traitor and renegade, then, Mr. Wescott."

"So men call me," he answered, in a bitter tone. "What is the use of hitting me when I'm down, miss? I can't hit back, and I'm under obligations to the man who employed me in more ways than one. But I came to say that you are to go ashore with me."

"I desire to return to my father. He will pay a heavy ransom for my safe return."

"No use, Miss Darrel. The man who had you brought here alone has power over your fate now."

"And who is he?"

"The Black Shereef," replied Reid.

"That monster?" she gasped.

"The devil is not so black as he is painted," he said, with a laugh. "But come on deck, if you please."

Nellie saw no use in disobeying and accompanied him on deck. Before her lay a city in the Eastern style, a place of some pretensions, with strong batteries on each side of the entrance to the harbor and many buildings clustering about a castle-like structure in the center. An elegant boat lay alongside the proa, manned by a white crew, and into this Reid handed his prisoner and took a seat with her.

"Let fall; give way!" was the order of Reid.

The oars dropped into the water with naval precision, and a few strokes quickly brought them to a flight of stone steps, where Reid assisted her to land. A beautiful palanquin, attended by four stout bearers, was waiting for her, and she took a seat in it and was carried on through the narrow streets of the city and into the castle. Here she alighted and was led up a flight of winding stairs into a room furnished in the luxurious style only to be seen in the East.

"These are your quarters," said Reid. "You will be at liberty as far as this suite of rooms is concerned, but I would not advise you to wander about much, as you do not know the palace."

He clapped his hands and a door opened at the back of the great room and a young girl entered.

"Aruna," said Reid, "this is the lady whom the chief expects. You have your orders."

The girl, who was a rather pretty Malay, made a low salaam, and turning to Nellie asked her in very good English if she wished for anything.

"Nothing except liberty," replied the prisoner, sadly, "and that you cannot give me."

The Malay girl shook her head.

"You will not answer questions which may be asked you, Aruna," said Reid. "When the Shereef comes he will tell the lady all she need know."

The girl nodded to signify that she understood, and Reid bowed respectfully to Nellie and went out.

"Will my lady eat?" asked the Malay maiden,

softly. "Aruna is here as her slave and only to obey her."

Nellie Darrel was only mortal and began to feel the pangs of hunger. She signified her wish for food, and Aruna clapped her hands and two women appeared.

"The lady would eat," said Aruna.

The women quickly spread a feast which would have been a temptation to an epicure. Nellie seated herself and made a very unromantic meal. When she had finished, the table was drawn away, and just then a cannon boomed at the port and cries of joy were heard in the streets.

"What is the matter?" the prisoner asked, turning to Aruna.

"The Shereef comes," replied the girl, proudly, "and our people delight to honor him. Would the white lady see how they welcome him on his return?"

Nellie stepped to the open window indicated by the girl and looked out. All the population of the city—men, women and children—seemed to be in the streets and hurrying toward the harbor, and a boat, manned by six rowers, was seen rapidly approaching the landing. A minute later a tall and martial figure, clad in the dress of a Malay war-chief, appeared at the head of the steps, attended by a glittering retinue. They came rapidly up the street, the women strewing flowers in the path and chanting a song in praise of the Black Shereef. As he came nearer the girl could see that his garments were of somber black and that his face was hidden by a black mask. He appeared to take the adulations of the multitude quite as his just due, and waving his hand to the people, disappeared within the portals of the castle.

"The Shereef is a great war-chief," said Aruna, proudly.

"Let his hands be red with the blood of innocent men," said Nellie.

"He is a warrior," averred the girl, "and great warriors delight to shed blood in battle. Since the days of the sable kings of the Malay there has been no chief so great as Selim Ben Mahoud, the Black Shereef."

The door opened, and he appeared upon the threshold.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLACK SHEREEF—ZARINA, THE MAD PRINCESS.

ELLEN DARREL shuddered at the sight of this man, when he spoke in a melodious voice:

"Peace be with you, Aruna; leave me with the white maiden."

The Malay girl bent her head obediently and hurried from the room while the Shereef stood looking at Ellen Darrel intently for a moment before he spoke again, and she gazed back at him with undaunted eyes. She saw a man of more than ordinary stature, a model of manly grace, whose face was completely hidden by the black mask, through which his eyes shone like twin stars.

"I am the Black Shereef," he said, in good English. "You do not bid me welcome."

"I do not know you," she answered. "If you are a warrior, as you claim, you will not make war upon a woman."

"I do not make war with you, sweet maiden. I saw your face in Shanghai, and it was fairer than the face of any Malay woman. What the Black Shereef loves—he takes. You are mine now, never to leave me."

"Never yours, while I have a hand to strike a weapon into my own heart," she declared.

"The white maiden has a stubborn heart, but more stubborn spirits have been broken within these walls," he asserted.

"My father and my lover will come to my aid."

"Let them come. They shall be made welcome with fire and kreeese. What now, Shereef Reid?"

"I have something important to say, as soon as you are at liberty."

"Go!" said the Shereef, impatiently, waving his hand. "I will come soon to the judgment hall, and you may wait for me there."

Reid turned away, grumbling a little, and the Shereef again turned to Nellie.

"Child," he said, "you will learn before you have been long in my city that I have only to lift my finger to be obeyed. The Malays fear me so, that if I bade one of them cast himself from the highest wall of the palace he would obey me. My will is law; I speak, and they obey."

"You will find in me one who will not be obedient, sir. More than that, my friends will leave no stone unturned to rescue me."

"They will find us ready to meet them. Enough of this for the present as I did not expect you to listen to reason at first; but I hope, for your own sake, that you will listen soon, for I am not very patient. Ha! What are you doing here, Zarina?"

"I have come to see this new toy which you have brought home, Shereef," replied a musical voice.

Nellie turned quickly, and saw a beautiful woman, clad like a princess, and wearing a tiara of precious stones, which were in themselves worth the ransom of a prince. Nellie thought, at the first glance, that she had never seen a more beautiful woman. Her face was of the Roman mold, haughty and clearly cut, with great, luminous eyes and firm lips. Her hair swept from beneath the band of the tiara in great masses of the hue of the raven's wing, reaching nearly to the floor. She wore a loose, flowing robe of figured silk, confined at the waist by a girdle with a golden buckle, and in it she carried a curved Malay kreeese and two elegantly mounted revolvers.

"I repeat, what are you doing here, Zarina?" hissed the Shereef.

"And I answer, that I came to see your new toy, which you have picked up on the sea. Shereef, you do not know Zarina yet. If you did, you would not try to frighten her by blustering words. I have little to thank you for and much cause to hate you, and yet, I would not see harm come to you—not yet, at least."

"Go out, Zarina. I will speak to you soon," said the Shereef, sternly.

"At your pleasure. I have seen the girl and she looks good and pure. And I swear by the gods the Malays worship, here and now, that I will drive my kreeese to the hilt in the heart of any man who does her wrong. Fear nothing, sweet maiden, Zarina is your friend, although she came as an enemy."

The Shereef raised his hands and clapped them loudly. Half a dozen Malays ran in at once.

"Seize this mad creature," cried the chief. "Put her in charge of Mahmond the Parsee, and bid him look to it that she does not wander alone about the palace any more."

Zarina retreated a single step, and, with a rapid motion, drew one of the revolvers from her belt.

"Malays!" she cried, "take warning before you throw away your lives. I will kill any man who lays the weight of a finger on me."

The Malays, who had begun to advance, stopped in trepidation. Zarina evidently meant just what she said.

"Look you, Shereef," she cried. "You know that I have ever been free as air. Countermand your order, or I will put my mark upon some of your slaves in a way they will not like."

"Go, men," said the Shereef. "I will admit that I ought to know you better, Zarina, but when you rave in this manner you ought to be put under restraint. No one could be more kind to you than I have been."

"Then let me alone. I love this sweet maiden, and it is the first time in long years that I have met one who is a fit mate for me, and now you try to drive me from her. I will not endure it."

"You will frighten her," said the Shereef, "because you talk so wildly."

"Ask her if she fears Zarina," said the girl, quietly. "If she says so, I will go."

"I do not fear her," replied Nellie. "She would do me no harm, and I feel that she is my only friend here."

"Then I will leave you together for awhile," said the Shereef, "but beware how you set her against me, Zarina, or in any way betray my secrets, for if you do, nothing shall save you."

"Fear not. Since that awful night when the ship fell a prey to your proas, and all I loved were lost, my brain has lain in darkness. I can remember nothing, neither my own name nor the name of my lover. But if I meet him I shall know him. Yes, yes, yes; I am sure of that."

"You need not fear Zarina, sweet maiden," said the Shereef. "The affliction she speaks of drove her mad, but she will do you no harm, and will be a companion to you. There is nothing I have ever repented so much as the calamity which drove her mad, for no more beautiful woman than Zarina, not yourself even, lives on earth to-day."

He turned quickly on his heel and left them, going down into the great hall, where Tom Reid was pacing up and down in deep thought.

"It is closing in upon us, Shereef," declared the man. "I begin to think that it is time to

realize, and in some other land reap the benefits of our years of labor. The men armed against us now are not the soft Orientals, but men of my race, who will fight while there is blood in their veins."

"I must bend this girl to my will before I go. Zarina has fallen in love with her, and perhaps it is best."

"Poor Zarina," said Reid, a subdued light upon his dark face. "I wonder, sometimes, that God has suffered us to live and prosper so long."

"Bah! Make your report and let me understand what it is you fear, and stop preaching."

"I fear nothing, Shereef. I have carried my life in my hand too long to greatly care how soon I lay it down," was the hot reply.

"Go on, then; let me know how you have obeyed my orders."

Reid gave a rapid account of the battle with the Tokio and the manner in which Ellen was captured, together with the destruction which was done by the Mystery.

"Then the man who navigates that craft must be a skillful engineer," declared the Shereef, "for I do not believe in necromancy. I will meet him by skill as great as his, I hope, and drive him from these seas. You have done your work well, Reid, and I cannot find fault with you. And now I give the Malays into your charge, and you must keep them in order and see that they do not run a muck. I suppose that they are frightened by the Torpedo."

"Nothing will induce them to go near that cursed island again," replied Reid.

"They lack the bull-dog instinct of the Anglo-Saxon race," said the Shereef. "Come with me, and we will break a bottle together after I deal out justice to two mutineers."

"Who are they?"

"Zarack and Amo," answered the chief.

"I suppose it is good to make an example now and then, but remember that they have many friends."

"I care not for that. Sound the signal," answered the Shereef, firmly.

Reid lifted a bugle which hung at his belt and sounded a clear call. The beat of many feet followed, and the crews of the proas, a motley crowd of all nations, came pouring in.

"Zarack and Amo, stand forth," cried the Shereef, as he seated himself upon a great chair at one end of the room. "I have to complain of you, in that you refused to obey orders in Shanghai."

Two gigantic Malays marched up in front of the chair.

"See, my children," said the Shereef, addressing the pirates. "These men have done wickedly. In an hour when I needed them most, they were mad with arrack, and nearly betrayed the secrets of the band. What say you to this, Zarack?"

"My lord has spoken truth," averred the Malay.

"And you, Amo?"

"The Shereef cannot lie," was the answer.

"You have a pistol in your belt, Amo; draw it."

The man obeyed.

"Cock it."

The snap of the lock was heard.

"Place it to your temple."

Without a tremor the man did as he was commanded.

"There is but one thing for you to do—you who would have betrayed the great secret. Fire!" thundered the Shereef.

The crack of the pistol was heard, and Amo sunk dead before the chair of justice. Zarack, in his turn, drew a pistol from his belt.

"I am ready, my Shereef," he said.

The Black Shereef looked at him for a moment with a kindling eye.

"You are a brave man, Zarack. Put up your weapon for I forgive you."

Zarack returned the pistol to his belt as unmoved as before.

"Take up the body of Amo, my children," commanded the Shereef. "He sinned, but he has atoned. Bury him as a great Malay warrior, with all the honors due to his mighty name."

The pirates lifted the body of the dead Malay and trooped from the great hall. Not one had raised his voice to expostulate, although Amo was a favorite among them. Tom Reid drew a long breath.

"By George! I thought there would be a mutiny, Shereef, but you have got a good nerve; I'll say that much."

"He who rules such men must rule them by the strong hand," was the reply. "Let the next three days be given to feasting, and after

that we will see what had better be done with our enemies at Godong Beg."

And for three days the city was the scene of unholy orgies, but such as they had often passed. Blood was shed, bodies were cast into the sea, but the Black Shereef sat serenely in his palace, and concocted a plan which he hoped would free him from his enemies, led by the Yankee Rajah.

CHAPTER X.

SAILING WITHOUT WIND—THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MALAY FLEET.

THE Black Shereef slept in a room half-way up a tower looking out upon the harbor. On the night after the great feast he retired to his rooms early, but not to rest. Dismissing his attendants, he flung open the casement, and drawing a luxurious divan close to the low windowsill, he reclined upon it, looking out upon the heaving sea. From this tower he had a range for miles in the direction of Godong Beg, and even as he gazed he saw, shimmering on the horizon, the white sails of a craft of some description. Catching up a night glass he leveled it at the sail, and recognized the Wave Witch. A wild cry of joy came to his lips.

"Tis her, by all the Malay gods!" he hissed. "Oh, if the wind goes down; if that sly dog will only give us time to get round him!"

He clapped his hands and a slave ran in.

"The Shereef Reid," he cried. "Tell him to make haste."

The slave hurried out, and five minutes later Reid came in hastily, half dressed, but carrying his pistols in his belt and a naked sword in his hand.

"Come here," cried the Black Shereef, quickly. "Take this glass and look at yonder schooner and tell me who it is."

Reid took but a single look and knew the schooner.

"The Yankee Rajah!" he shouted. "By heaven, the fellow has good nerve to venture so near us here. Do you know that the wind is going down and that he may be in a trap? See that! as I live by bread he is heading up toward the harbor as coolly as if he owned the city."

"Very well," said the Shereef, quietly. "Go and get the Malays together quickly. No noise of any kind, but man all the proas in the port and let them be prepared. I will have that schooner, and when Marco and the Yankee Rajah are in my power, may my right arm wither to the shoulder if both the dogs do not pray for death at my hands. Away with you and as soon as the proas are ready go out and attack her."

Reid was gone in an instant, and five minutes later hundreds of forms were seen flitting about in the moonlight. The gleam of arms and a suppressed hum told that these were men preparing for battle. Half an hour later the dark, snake-like proas began to crawl out of the harbor with muffled oars, bearing full five hundred men, bound on an errand of vengeance. For, by this time, they knew that the tributary chief who had attacked the Rajah on his way to Gadong Beg had been defeated, and his proas put to flight, and many of them had lost friends.

The wind went down, and then, idly rocking on the tranquil sea, lay the Wave Witch, with perhaps half a dozen men on deck, and the Yankee Rajah swinging lazily in a hammock between the masts, with a night glass in his hand, from time to time turning it upon the approaching proas in an indolent way.

"The man has gone mad," muttered Reid, who stood on the deck of the leading proa; "or has he indeed some reason for all this confidence? I don't half like it."

The proas on the wings separated and began to crawl out to get to windward of the schooner and cut off her escape by sea, should the wind rise, and yet the Rajah never changed his indolent attitude, but, taking a long Manila cheroot from a case at his side, began to smoke, tranquilly, an amused smile upon his thin face.

"Tarnation cute, them critters ar'," he muttered. "Wal, wal, wal! this world is all a fleeting show and I reckon it is almost time for the circus to open. See 'em sneak 'round us. That's right, boys—the further you get to sea the better we like it."

Four of the proas lay inshore, perhaps a league from the schooner, while the remaining six aimed to secure positions of vantage. The Rajah rolled over in his hammock and watched these attentively as they spread out, perhaps half a mile apart, and blocked the passage seaward.

"I judge there'll be fun on the ocean in mighty short order now," muttered the Rajah.

"Oh, you darned fools, do you think I am the man to be caught napping?"

As he spoke there was a slight trembling under the keel of the schooner, and the smile deepened on his face, while a wild cry broke from the lips of the Malays inshore, who were waiting for the others to take position. The schooner, without a wind, without a sail, began to glide swiftly through the water toward the open sea. The oars dropped from their palsied hands as this strange phenomenon took place and a ringing laugh broke from the lips of the Rajah.

"Row on, you dogs," screamed Reid, wild with rage. "Though he can sail without a wind, I'll have that schooner or sink alongside."

Scarcely had he spoken when the proa on the right was seen to heave up suddenly from the sea while cries of horror were heard and the long craft began to settle rapidly and in a moment more went down, leaving the men to bathe with the water. A moment later and the two others except that of Tom Reid sunk in the same remarkable way.

Reid was no coward, but such a strange fatality as this might have appalled the stoutest heart, and the Malays in his boat suddenly turned the proa, and, bending to their oars, began to row with all their strength toward the harbor. In vain Tom Reid stormed and threatened and even drew his weapons on them but it was of no avail. So thoroughly were they frightened that even the fear of instant death at his hands could not stop them, and the proa dashed into the harbor.

The Black Shereef, who was watching the progress of events from his tower, came dashing down, overturning all who came in his way, and ran toward the harbor, where he sprung into a boat and boarded the proa with his weapons in his hands.

"Dogs and cowards!" he screamed, "turn again, or by all the gods I will shoot you down in your tracks. Shall we leave our brothers to die yonder? Shereef Reid, you are a coward."

"You lie!" hissed Reid. "I have given the best years of my life to your service, and when you say I am a coward, I say again, you lie! Bid them turn the proa and board yonder cursed schooner, and see who is the coward—you or I!"

The rowers stopped, so utterly were they under the influence of the Black Shereef, and rowed out of the passage at a mad pace, heading toward the schooner, which they expected to find closely engaged with the six proas which barred her passage to the sea. But as they cleared the harbor they saw the Wave Witch rocking as before on the tranquil sea; but of all the proas which had gone so boldly out to attack her, not one was in sight. Every one had disappeared, and the sea was dotted here and there with the heads of men swimming for their lives.

"What say you now, Shereef?" cried Reid. "Am I a coward or have we reason to fear? Give the word to board her, and though there be death in the track I am not the one who will give back a step."

The Shereef gave a signal to stop rowing and remained for a time in deep thought, his head bent and a look of indecision on his face. At last he spoke:

"You were right, Reid," he said, quickly. "Let us save all the men we can and get back to the city. They are masters on the sea, but we can defend the harbor yet."

CHAPTER XI.

THE BLACK PANTHER—A VISION OF THE PAST.

No time was lost, and when all was done scarcely two hundred of the band who had gone out so bravely to the attack on the schooner remained alive, and many of their bravest chiefs had sunk to rise no more. The Malays hung their heads, for they felt the shame of this crushing defeat. Not one of them could say how the proas had been sunk, for although they feared that the Mystery had taken part in it, that dreaded craft had not been seen, as on former occasions. They remembered only that they had felt a shock and the bottom was torn out of the proas, the water rushing in so rapidly that it was impossible to stop the leak.

"It is closing in on us, Reid," said the Shereef, in a low voice. "Give orders to the men to stretch the chains across the mouth of the harbor. We can bar the schooner out, at least."

Reid shook his head and as the proa landed, turned aside to obey the orders, while the Shereef, unattended, made his way to the palace. As he passed the suite of rooms which had been set aside for the use of Ellen Dar-

rel he paused suddenly and clapped his hands. A moment later Aruna appeared.

"The white girl," he said, in a questioning tone. "Has she retired?"

"No, Lord Shereef. From her window she has watched the battle, and has seen the destruction of the proas. The lady Zarina is with her."

With an ejaculation of rage he pushed open the door and entered, and saw Zarina and Nellie sitting in the window, their arms twined about each other, looking seaward.

"Away, Zarina," he exclaimed, savagely. "I would speak with the prisoner."

Zarina arose with sparkling eyes and faced him boldly.

"I thought I told you, long ago, that it was not well to threaten me, Shereef. Beware what you do, for you know that I can protect myself."

He took a step toward her, when she drew a small silver whistle from her belt and breathed through it softly, when with a cat-like bound a huge black panther sprung through the open door and crouched at her feet facing the Shereef. The eyes of the black beast glistened like stars as she looked at him, and the Shereef recoiled, half drawing his kreeses.

"Lay a finger on me or this prisoner and you know your fate," cried Zarina. "Ha, Zadee, my beauty, will you defend your mistress? If I give her the word, she will tear you into pieces."

The panther extended her white claws and showed her long fangs, giving utterance to a snarling cry, but did not move. The Shereef trembled, for he knew that the savage brute, trained under the hand of Zarina, would spring upon him if her mistress but pointed at him.

"Go," said Zarina. "Something whispers to me that I should do well to let loose the beast upon you. I know not how it is, but it seems that the past is coming back to me, and that in that past you have wronged me cruelly. Woe to you if I remember all."

The Shereef recoiled, and with a savage cry rushed from the room. A moment more and the sound of a horn rung through the palace. He was calling the Malays to his aid, and Zarina flung the door to and began to pile the furniture against it. The sound of hurrying feet could be heard in the passage, and a heavy blow struck the door.

"Open this door, Zarina," cried a voice so hoarse and strained that she scarcely knew it. "You shall have no mercy for this act."

"Let me see the one, Malay or white, who dare pass this door," was the reply, as she drew her revolvers. "Stand back, Nellie; they may fire."

"You can only die, Zarina, but you cannot aid me," said Nellie. "It is perhaps better to yield."

"I do not care so greatly for my life as to hesitate when death threatens me," was the reply. "Go into the alcove yonder, and leave me to deal with these villains."

"Beat in the door," shouted the Shereef. "Down with it, I say!"

The sound of axes was heard and the heavy door began to splinter, and then came crashing in, but could not fall on account of the heavy furniture piled against it. To enter the room the Malays must clamber over this heap, and the first had scarcely showed himself above it when he fell, shot through the brain. The others recoiled in dismay, and the girl laughed wildly.

"Who is next?" she cried. "Show yourself if you dare, Shereef. I will die gladly if I can get a shot at you first."

Another crash was heard, and a second door, leading into the next suite of rooms, suddenly burst open, and the Malays came pouring in. Zarina dragged a heavy divan before the alcove and intrenched herself there, and two men who led the rush fell dead by well-directed revolver shots.

"Spring, Zadee," she exclaimed, in her clear, bell-like voice. "Tear the villains limb from limb, my darling."

She had scarcely spoken when the body of the black panther was seen in the air, and the long, lithe creature sprung into the midst of the crowd of Malays, who, shrieking in terror, fell back before the rush of the angry beast, but not before two of them had fallen under the strokes of her powerful paws. But at this juncture the Malays in the hall succeeded in pushing aside the furniture and rushed into the room.

"The panther first," shouted the Shereef. "Kill her, I tell you, and attend to the mad girl after."

Forty men flung themselves, with pistols and

kreeses, upon the noble beast, and the room was the theater of a savage battle for ten minutes, in the midst of which the crack of Zarina's revolvers was heard again and again. Such a battle could only end in one way, and the brave beast fell at last, pierced by a hundred gaping wounds, but not until she had killed four men and desperately wounded several more, and Zarina had fired her last shot, when the Malays turned upon her. But she had caught up two kreeses from the blood-stained floor, and, still intrenched behind the divan, stood ready to fight to the last gasp.

"We must lose no more men," cried the Shereef. "Fire upon her, and bring the mad demon down."

"Fire at me!" said the musical voice of Nellie Darrel, forcing herself in front of her brave defender, who strove in vain to push her aside. "You shall kill me before your shots reach this brave woman."

"Fire not a shot!" screamed the Shereef. "The man who injures her shall die by my hand. Dash in and take them alive."

As he spoke there was a commotion at the back of the room, and a man came dashing through the Malays to the front, with a bare saber in one hand and a revolver in the other. It was Tom Reid, his eyes flashing and his whole frame trembling with rage.

"Stand back, you bounds!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder. "I have often drawn the sword beside you, Shereef, but I never did you better service than when I warn you not to harm Zarina."

"Out of the way, Reid," replied the Shereef, hoarsely. "You only invite your own fate."

"Have you not done this poor girl wrong enough in your day? Back, I say, or much as I have loved you, I will let you feel the temper of my blade."

With a hoarse cry of rage the Shereef drew his sword and sprung forward and the blades crossed. Both were practiced swordsmen and it was hard to say which would have won the mastery, had not the foot of Tom Reid slipped in the blood of one of the dead Malays as he made a sweeping stroke. Before he could recover a dozen of the band hurled themselves upon him and flung him to the floor, when he was quickly bound. Zarina threw down her weapons and came forward with a vacant laugh.

"Ha, ha, ha, Shereef, that was a merry time; I don't know when I have had so much sport in many a day. But why do you bind Tom Reid? he has done no harm. Ha! Malays—back; touch not one upon whom the finger of the gods has been laid."

The Shereef made a step toward her, but one of the Malay chieftains interposed and laid his hand gently upon the broad breast of his leader.

"Listen, great Shereef," he pleaded in the musical voice so often heard in Oriental nations. "It is a law of the Ruler of all things that the one whose brain is touched shall not be held to account for any evil done. Zarina has run a muck and killed our brothers; she has turned the wrath of the black Javan panther upon us—and yet see; we, who have lost friends, say to you—'let Zarina go free; do not punish her, for we have forgiven her.'"

"Say all the Malays thus?" demanded the Shereef. "Ye who would not see Zarina punished, step forward a pace."

Every Malay made a step in advance.

"It is well," said the Shereef, inclining his head. "Go, Zarina; you shall not be punished this time, but beware of the next, for I swear to you that I will never again forgive you."

Zarina went out slowly, casting a strange look at Tom Reid as he lay bound before her. Once she paused, and made a step toward him, but seemed to think better of it, turned away, and was gone.

"Take up these bodies and give them burial, sons of the Malay," was the order of the Black Shereef. "Zarack, Tonadi, Malo and Terrai, I give the Shereef Reid into your hands. Guard him well to-night, and in the morning bring him to the Hall of Judgment. Tonan Denal, take the power which he has held. Guard the port, and if you see the schooner come again, let me know."

He approached Nellie Darrel and caught her by the wrist.

"Come with me," he said. "I will give you a prison more secure than this."

He led her through the long halls of the palace and into the lower rooms, where the stone walls dripped with moisture, and the air was heavy and fetid. She shuddered as he pushed open the door of a dark cell, and he felt the tremor in

her frame. But, with a hollow laugh, he pushed her into the cell and closed the door with a crash, and then, opening a little wicket, put in a lighted lamp.

"Rest in peace," he said. "In the morning I will come to you again."

He went up the stairs rapidly, muttering to himself, and after reaching the next floor turned aside and followed the passage for a little distance until he came to the door of a strong room, which he opened by means of a key which he kept upon his person. He struck a match and lighted a lamp swinging from the ceiling, and after some search touched a certain part of the wall and slid back a little panel, scarcely four inches square. From this recess he drew a broad belt, apparently made to hold valuables, and unclasping his robe, he passed this belt about his body and buckled it fast.

"That is well done," he muttered. "If compelled to fly, there is wealth enough here for the wants of a king. But why do I talk of flying, and why does the thought of death follow me so closely lately? I dreamed of Arthur Carrington last night, as he looked when he walked the plank after the Cairncross went down. God help me, I had no need to murder him; I had done him wrong enough."

He blew out the light and stepped out, closing the door carefully. As he did so there stood before him the figure of a tall man, with a pale, set face, the man whom we have seen with Saul Belton in the arrack shop at Shanghai, whom he called Arthur. The Shereef uttered a cry of horror and staggered back.

"Away!" he cried. "Why do you appear to me?"

"Silence," hissed the visitor. "Dare to move a finger and you are dead. You know me, then? you fear me too, wretch that you are."

"What would you have?" moaned the Black Shereef. "Yes, yes, I fear you more than any created being. Why are you here?"

"I come to you for vengeance and ask you, what you have done with Edith Carlyle," replied the pale-faced man.

A shudder passed through the frame of the Black Shereef, but he did not reply.

"I have followed like your shadow for seven years, seeking for my darling," panted Arthur, "but I have not been able to learn anything of her. Tell me, you dog, or I will cut the secret out of your black heart."

"I have traitors all about me, Arthur Carrington," or you would not be here. Now that I know it is not a ghost of the dead past which haunts me, I am a man again. I will drag you a prisoner and give you up to the Malays, who will make short work of you, "for they hate the Spirit of the Waves."

With a sudden leap, he hurled himself upon the American, who only took one step backward and caught him by the wrists. It seemed to the Malay chief, that those hands were steel, so cold and pitiless was the grip upon him. He struggled a moment, and then uttered one wild cry for help, which rung with startling distinctness through the vaulted passages. Arthur held him a moment and then said:

"Your hour is not yet come. I could kill you if I would, but I leave you for the vengeance of the tongueless Malay, Marco. God pity you when you fall into his hands."

And, releasing one hand, he struck the Shereef a stunning blow in the face and vanished, just as a dozen guards, armed and bearing torches, rushed into the passage. They lifted the Shereef and bore him into an upper chamber, where he quickly revived, when he ordered search to be made for Arthur Carrington in all the lower parts of the palace. The search was vain, for the strange man had left no trace behind.

"Set a guard at my door," whispered the Shereef, "and let me get some rest. I must have strength for the struggle which is coming, if he is on my track."

He slept at last, but only to dream that the hands of Marco the Mute were on his throat choking him to death, while Arthur Carrington watched his dying struggles with a pitiless eye.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MYSTERY AT WORK IN THE HARBOR—THE FATE OF TOM REID.

He awoke with a start and the morning sun was streaming in at the window. As he approached it something glanced by him like a beam of light and quivered in the wall. It was an arrow, neatly made, and sent with a force which buried the head in the wall. He tore it out, and found wrapped about the shaft, this missive:

"To the Black Shereef:

"Sleep no more. The avengers are on your track. Beware of the Mute Malay. Beware of Arthur Carrington."

"God's curses upon them," he shrieked, stamping his foot angrily. "Are my men both blind and deaf that such things can be done?"

He rushed from the room in a rage and commenced a furious search, but no one had seen Arthur Carrington. As far as Marco was concerned, his giant form was well known, and he had not been on the island.

"I shall go mad," muttered the Shereef. "Tom Reid was not so far wrong when he warned me to fly. It would have been better if he had done so. But Tom, my good, kind, faithful henchman, at least I can take vengeance upon you. Ha! what do you say, Tonan?"

"A fleet is making for the island, Shereef. There are seven proas and the Wave Witch leads the way."

"The men of Gadong Beg are coming then," answered the Shereef. "But fear not; they can never enter the harbor if we do our duty. Lay the proas which are left broadside to the channel and let every gun be loaded. We can sink them one by one as they enter the harbor."

"It shall be done, Great Prince. Will you fight beside me, or shall thy servant, Tonan Denal, do the work?"

"I trust thee, Tonan. Go thy way, and may the Malay gods direct thy guns," answered the leader.

The chief bowed and hurried away, and his leader went down to the lower cells, where the four men selected stood guard over Tom Reid.

"Bring out the prisoner," he said. "Let him be led to the east tower."

Reid, with his hands bound, was led up the stairs and reached the tower.

"Bring him to the window," the Shereef commanded. "Now, Reid, look out to sea and tell me what is there."

Tom glanced seaward and smiled. There, in full view, led by the Wave Witch came the fleet of the Rajah of Gadong Beg. At a glance he saw that the decks were crowded with men, and that they were heading for the channel.

"You know them, Reid. It is that cursed Yankee Rajah, coming to attack us. Had you been true to me you would have led the defense, but as it is, you shall see us destroy them, and then I shall order you cast into the den of the black panthers. You have seen what a black panther can do."

Reid looked at him with a smile which had no fear in it.

"Let's sit down to it, Shereef," he said. "It is only fair that I should get my pay for serving such a black-hearted dog as you are. Here, Malay; wheel up that divan."

The Malay stared at him a moment and then wheeled the divan in front of the window, where Tom seated himself coolly. The fleet of Saul Belton held on steadily for the channel, but when half a league away the Wave Witch went up into the wind and lay to, and the proas did the same.

"There is going to be sport," Reid asserted, quietly. "It will amuse me to watch it."

"And I, too," said the sweet voice of Zarina, as she entered and seated herself on the divan next to Tom Reid. "Why don't you bring Nellie; it would amuse her, too, Shereef."

"She shall come, by Heaven," hissed the Malay Prince. "Go, Zarack; take this key and open the seventh cell in the lower passage and bring the white girl here."

Zarina managed to lay her hand upon the wrist of Tom Reid and pressed it softly. He knew that he had a friend.

In a few moments Nellie appeared, led by the Malay, and by the orders of the Shereef a chair was pushed up to one of the windows and she was seated.

"Yonder are your friends," sneered the pirate, "and they dare come here to brave my power. You shall see how well they will be met. That is the schooner of the Yankee Rajah, and with him is the young American whom you love and your father. You shall see me destroy them utterly."

"Perhaps," muttered Tom Reid.

"Yonder channel is full of torpedoes attached to chains. When they enter they will strike these chains and be blown into the air," the Shereef asserted.

"Oh, if I could warn them," gasped Nellie.

"They don't seem to need it" declared Tom Reid. "The man who catches Paul Belton napping must rise early in the morning, I tell you."

"Silence," hissed the Shereef. "See how my proas lie, girl. If by any fortune one of the

ships should break through the line, it would be only to meet swift destruction from their guns."

"Just so," interjected Tom Reid; "but what is the matter with those proas, by the way?"

Up to this time the Malays had stood idly on the decks of their vessels, their weapons ready, waiting for the fleet of the Rajah to appear. In the center of the line was the beautiful felucca owned by the Malay chief, her heavy guns all bearing on the channel, and on each side the proas. Attracted by the words of Tom Reid the Black Shereef looked that way, and saw that the proa nearest to the shore had settled by the head, and appeared to be filling. There was dire confusion on board the craft, and the men were running this way and that, looking over the side and shaking their weapons fiercely at some object under the water, while the others, no longer lying quietly at their anchors, were observed to have cut their cables and were darting about the harbor as if to elude some great danger.

"Do you know what I think, Shereef?" said Tom Reid, coolly. "Unless I am very much mistaken, the Mystery is in the harbor. If so, good-bye to your fleet."

The Shereef tore his hair wildly and uttered a fierce malediction, but at that moment the long black hull of the Mystery was seen to rise from the sea and dash with inconceivable velocity against the side of another proa, through which she seemed to pass half-way. Then the strange craft backed away and continued her work of destruction, while the Shereef, helpless, absolutely howled with rage.

"I told you it would be amusing," Tom Reid said, laughing heartily. "Ever so much obliged to you for bringing me up here. No matter what you may do to me, I have the blessed satisfaction of knowing that the Rajah is sure to win a victory over you and your Malays."

"If you speak another word I will cut you down," screamed the Shereef.

"Don't do that. This is fun for me, considering the fact that you brought me here to harrow up my feelings. There he goes after another."

The Mystery seemed directed by a madman. She dashed wildly along the surface of the harbor, dived into the clear depths, and then came dashing up like a whale from his soundings, throwing the water high into the air and revealing the long cylinder of the hull and the sharp beak which protruded from the bow. The bullets which the desperate Malays discharged; at the strange craft flew harmlessly into space and the Mystery hurled herself bodily against a third proa, tearing her way through her sides as if they had been paper.

Then she backed away, leaving the proa to sink, and disappeared in the waves. Five minutes after the fragments of another craft were scattered on the waves, and only the felucca of the Black Shereef remained.

"Well done, Mystery," cried Reid. "Now we will see what comes next."

The Mystery had come to the surface and lay idly rocking on the waters of the harbor, not far from the large felucca, while the Malay chief was making desperate efforts to bring a gun to bear upon her. But, just as he was about to fire, the Mystery darted suddenly forward and the ball went plunging into the sea just where the Torpedo had been a moment before. Then, with wild cries of fear, the crew forsook the vessel and hurled themselves into the harbor and the ship drifted toward the shore. A short laugh from Tom Reid announced the termination of the action, and the Shereef turned fiercely upon him.

"Now for my promise," he said, hoarsely. "Away with him, Malays; to the den of the panthers."

Reid sprung suddenly forward, and raising his manacled hands, struck the Shereef furiously over the head, and brought him to the floor like a log, the blood streaming from under his mask. But he was on his feet in an instant, and assisted in dragging the unfortunate man into the lower part of the palace, where they stopped before a barred door, behind which the long shining bodies of two black panthers, either of them as strong as Zarina's dead pet, were seen. At the sound of voices they leaped up and clung to the bars, and looked at the comers with hungry eyes.

"They have not been fed for two days, Tom," said the Shereef, showing his white teeth beneath the mask. "What do you say to the prospect?"

"I have nothing to say," was the quick reply. "Could I clear my conscience of one bad act, when I aided you in the attack on the Cairn-

cross, I might even say that I am ready to die. You might do me one favor, if you had any mercy in your black heart."

"Tell me how to make your end more bitter, and I will do it," was the savage answer.

"Say no more. I would have asked you to bury your steel in my heart, and end, by a single blow, all my pain. I would like to send a message to Zarina, if—"

"We waste time. Open the door and fling him in," screamed the villain.

Two men, armed with spears, beat back the panthers from the grating, although they ramped and yelled savagely, while another man suddenly slipped the door open and signed to the Malays holding Tom Reid. They cast off his bands, and taking him by the shoulders, pushed him quickly into the cage, shut the grated door dropped the bars on the outside, and then hastily left the room so as not to look upon his death. As they went they heard the shrill yells of the panthers and then a scream of agony.

"That is over," said the Shereef coolly. "Good-bye to Tom Reid."

Without another thought of the man who had fought by his side for years, he hurried out of the palace. He found the city in utter confusion, the women and children gathered in groups, and even as he looked he saw the decks of his felucca swarming with men, and at a glance he knew them; not Papuans or Sooloos, but the men of Gadong Beg, who were training his own guns against him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SHEREEF'S TERMS—MANTON'S PROPOSITION

—MARCO THE MUTE APPEARS.

SAUL BELTON, with his fleet, had lain quietly outside the harbor, until the work of the Mystery had been done. He was too wise a warrior to trust his shipping inside the harbor, when, without danger, he could insure the destruction of the fleet."

Harry Castleton had been eager to follow the Mystery into the harbor at once, but had been restrained by the wise counsels of Yankee Rajah, and as the proas went down one by one, he was satisfied that the delay was useful.

"Look yonder," cried Saul Belton, at last. "There's the signal for us to come on."

As he spoke a flag was showed at the entrance to the harbor—a black flag, with a blood-red hand in the center.

"The way is clear for us now," asserted the Rajah. "Make sail, Marco."

The mute made a signal to the second mate and the schooner stood boldly into the harbor, closely followed by the other craft. As they came in view of the town they saw a large party of old men, women and children climbing a lofty hill behind the city, evidently intent upon flight.

"We've got the devils scared, anyhow," said the Rajah. "They are on the run at last."

The fleet rounded to in front of the palace and trained their guns upon it. Scarcely had they done so when a boat, bearing a white flag, pulled away from the steps and approached the Wave Witch. It carried three Malay captains, whom the Rajah recognized as well-known pirate leaders under the Black Shereef.

"So, so," he said. "They are ready to treat now. Come on board, you thieves."

The embassy stepped proudly over the rail, and the Rajah, accompanied only by Marco, went to meet them.

"Why do you come here, sons of the Malay?" he demanded.

"We are sent by our great master, the Black Shereef. He asks why the Rajah of Gadong Beg comes to destroy his fleet and frighten our women and children?"

"I will say that your cussed Shereef has got good cheek. Didn't he just try to play the same game on me?"

"He did this because the Spirit of the Waves destroyed our fleet off Borneo and sunk the proas near Gadong Beg three days ago."

"That is all pure foolishness, Malay. Now you understand, just as well as I do, that you wouldn't have left a man alive in Gadong Beg if you could have got in. Ain't that so, now?"

"My master speaks by my mouth," replied the Malay, ignoring the words of the Rajah. "He says: 'I have sent away those who are weak, but the strong warriors will stay and die upon the threshold of the city before a foot of an enemy shall be placed in the palace. You have beaten us upon the sea, but if you attack us on the land, you will find that the Malay kreeese is sharp.'"

"We don't scare, old man," replied Belton. "Go to your master and say that we must have

his palace, just to search it. Whatever prisoners he has will be taken away and any property which looks as if it was stolen will be ours."

"There is in the palace of the Shereef a maiden fair as the sun, whom he loves. For her sake he has made the Rajah of Gadong Beg his enemy, and he cannot give her up. There is, besides her, Zarina, a woman more fair than she, upon whom the finger of the Great Spirit has been laid. You shall have Zarina, if you will."

"No, we must have the palace and all which it contains, prisoners and all."

"The Shereef will laugh you to scorn. He would sooner die upon the threshold of his palace than give it up to you. Have you no better answer than this?"

"No," was the abrupt reply.

"Remember that when the Shereef runs a muck he does evil deeds. Look at Marco; in an evil hour he braved our leader, and his tongue was torn out by the roots. Take the gold and jewels which I offer you, take Zarina, and go; then we shall be friends."

"I give you half an hour to open the doors of the palace. At the end of that time I shall open fire, if I do not hear from you."

The Malay who had acted as spokesman bowed gracefully and stepped into his boat, followed by his companions. They proceeded to the palace and were met in the doorway by the Shereef.

"What do they offer?" he demanded.

"You must give up the palace and your prisoner and trust to their mercy."

"And what say you, sons of the Malay?"

"That we will fight while one of us can lift a kreeese, and die as warriors should; but we will not surrender."

"Do you speak for all the warriors?"

"Yes," was the firm reply.

"Then all is well. They are strong, but we shall prove to them that they cannot win us easily. What say the men to the death of Shereef Reid?"

"They say as I do—death to all traitors; he has found a fitting tomb in the maw of the black beast of Java."

The Shereef drew a long breath, for he had feared that the death of Reid might have made him enemies, and he could not afford to have any one turn against him now.

"Go back again, oh, captain," he said, "and speak to the Yankee Rajah. Tell him I ask but one day to decide whether I will surrender or not. When the sun rises again, if my flag still waves upon the eastern tower, bid him do his worst."

The captain made the usual salutation, turned upon his heel, went back to the schooner and delivered his message.

"I s'pose the skunk wants time for some deviltry," averred Saul Belton, "but never mind. He shall have the time he asks."

The Malay sprung again into his boat and hurried back. The Shereef smiled grimly as he heard the answer.

"He is a greater fool than I thought him. Of one thing he may be assured—sooner than give up that girl I will kill her with my own hand. I have dared too much for her sake to lose her now. Who has seen Zarina?"

"She was here but a moment since," answered one of the Malays. "Something strange has happened to her. Oh, Shereef. At times it seems as if the finger of the Great Ruler had been lifted, and that she remembers what she was."

"Let her dare to come in my path, and I would not hesitate to give her the fate which has fallen upon Reid. Keep good watch, Tonan; as for me, I have work to do, and must not be disturbed unless they break the truce."

He went up to his rooms and entered, locking the doors behind him, and was seen no more for some hours. What he was doing no man knew, but they thought he was making plans for defense.

In the meantime Nellie had been returned to her prison. She had seen the downfall of Tom Reid, but did not know the horrible fate to which he had been given. She sat in the narrow cell, her head resting on her hands, when she heard a slight clicking sound in the wall behind her and started to her feet. What could it mean?

The clicking sound, similar to that of clock-work, continued for a moment, and then a part of the wall seemed to give way and slid aside, and the form of a man stepped into the opening. A single glance was enough. It was Richard Manton, whom she had not seen since that night in Shanghai, when, by the aid of Saul Belton, she had been rescued from the hands of her abductors.

"Hist!" he whispered, raising his hand. "In the face of desperate danger I come to save you from the hands of these Malay dogs."

"Richard Manton!" she gasped.

"Ay, Richard Manton, the man you rejected for that young sailor, who has done nothing to save you."

"It is false," she cried, in an indignant tone. "Even now he is in the harbor, ready to do battle for my sake. You have no right to villify him, Captain Manton."

"I care nothing for him," was the haughty response, "but what he has failed to do I am ready to perform this night."

"How did you come here?"

"By betraying my trust. The Black Shereef has been my friend, and it was for me that you were taken. But your fatal charms, which have driven me mad, proved too much for him, and he refused to give you up to me. I have used my knowledge of his palace to reach you, and—"

"Liar!" cried a ringing voice.

Manton started, and with a cry of rage drew a revolver and looked this way and that for the speaker. But no one was in sight.

"Who spoke?" he cried. "Is there a spy upon me, even in this palace? Wait; I will come to you again."

He darted through the secret door and closed it, and for half an hour Nellie stood there alone, alternating between hope and fear. At last the door opened again, and Manton appeared, his eyes flashing fire.

"I could not have been deceived, and I am sure I heard the voice of a man who hates me, but with all my search about the palace I cannot find him. It is well for him that I could not get him within reach of my pistol, or his interference would have ended quickly. Now listen to my plans. I can enter this palace when I will, and to-night, when all is quiet, I will come and set you free."

"Where will you take me?" asked Nellie.

"No matter for that. I save you only on the condition that you promise upon your sacred honor, to be my wife the moment we set foot in a civilized port. Will you give me this promise?"

"You ask too much," she replied, coldly. "I distrust a man who can make such terms with a woman in deadly peril, as I am. No; I will not promise to be your wife; I never could be happy with one who takes advantage of my danger to wring such a promise from me."

"You are mad, girl," he said, in a hoarse voice. "Do not forget that I have loved you long, and in love and war all things are fair. You must yield; it is the only hope you have. Do you prefer the love of the Black Shereef to mine?"

"He is a tiger, I know," she answered, "but from such a man only evil deeds are looked for. You have it in your power to earn my undying gratitude. My father and my lover are in the harbor, and you can use your power to place me in safety with them. My love, Captain Manton, you can never have."

He stood glaring at her like a tiger about to spring, but said not a word for some moments. At last he spoke, and his voice was so hoarse and strained that she would not have recognized it.

"Have your way, then, since it must be so. If you prefer the love of this savage chief to mine, I am not the one to balk you in your chaste designs. But I give you this last chance. At twelve to-night I will come to you for your answer; if you give me the same then, I will abandon you to your fate."

"It is useless for you to come; you have my answer now."

"Perhaps you may change your mind when your fate stares you in the face. You may think that your lover can save you, but I tell you that the Shereef will kill you before he will give you up to Harry Castleton. For the present, I bid you good-by."

He passed through the secret door, closed it with a sharp click and was gone. Ten minutes later the door again opened and another face looked in. It was a dark face, but not uncomely, the face of Marco the Mute. He looked at her attentively for a moment and made rapid gestures by which she understood that he could not speak. He thrust his hand into the breast of his sarong and produced a note, which he handed her. She tore it open rapidly and read these words:

"Trust Marco; he cannot speak, but his heart is true as steel. Do as he bids you, my darling, and you will be saved."

HARRY.

Nellie pressed her lips to the missive and turned to Marco. Before she had time to speak

the wicket in the door was pushed open and the Black Shereef looked in. His wild cry of rage rung through the corridor, as, flinging the door open, he came rushing in, his eyes blazing through his mask.

"Black dog," he cried, "do you dare the vengeance of the Black Shereef? Help—ho! Seize this villain, and to the panthers with him. Let his bones lie with those of the traitor, Tom Reid."

A dozen Malays rushed together upon Marco, but his giant form seemed to grow larger as he faced them, and seizing the foremost by the shoulder and waist he whirled him in the air and hurled him like a ball into the midst of the advancing pirates. Before they could recover from this strange attack he burst through the ranks and gained the corridor, closing and barring the door. His hollow laugh sounded through the hall as thefeat was accomplished, and then the sound of hurrying feet could be heard as he hastened away. The Shereef actually bellowed with rage as he dashed open the secret door and gained another passage; but all search was vain, for Marco had made his escape.

CHAPTER XIV.

OWASSO'S DEADLY DEED—ZARINA IN BONDS.

The Malay Chieftain came back panting for breath, and breathing maledictions upon all his enemies—and he had many—and among them all he feared Marco most, next to Arthur Cartington; and now both these vindictive men were on his track.

"You are no longer safe here, girl," he cried, catching her by the wrist. "Come with me."

He led her through the halls to his own rooms and made her seat herself. He too sat down near her, with the air of a man whose mind was made up.

"My enemies are gathering about me fast," he said, "but I shall talk them yet."

"You would do well to give me up, and they will trouble you no more," she averred.

He uttered a snarl like that of a wild beast, and rose suddenly and shook a threatening finger in her face.

"Before I saw you, girl, I was a happy man, I was master of all around me and victorious in all I undertook. But now you see me, baffled, beaten, and all on your account."

"I am glad to hear it."

"Beware what you say. I have read in the book of your worship that the strong man of Israel, Samson, pulled down upon his enemies the walls of their temple, and died with them there. Sooner than see you torn from me, I will die as he died."

"Why not yield like a man, when you are beaten?" she demanded.

"Never. I have periled all on the chance of winning you, and I will have you or perish. And if I cannot get your love, no one else shall. Yes, your lover is there, and he shall see you die if he persists in his attempt to force his way into the palace."

"He would sooner witness my death than see me your prey, wretch. Do your worst, for I defy you," cried the brave girl.

The Shereef clutched at his throat as if choking, and his eyes rolled fearfully. The next moment he caught her in his arms, dragged her to a strong room, into which he thrust her hastily, locked the door upon her, and placed a guard at the door.

"There you are safe, my lady," he said. "It is well I did my work quickly, or I should have been tempted to kill her where she stood. Why do I think of Zarina and the ship Cairncross today? Is it because that was my first great crime, and my fate is near at hand? Now then, Malay, what do you want?"

The captain who had been sent to give the answer of the Shereef to the Rajah had suddenly appeared before him.

"I have seen the Rajah again, and with him a Barsakaw whose face is terrible to look upon, and who gave me a message for you," the Malay said.

"Did he give a name?"

"No," was the reply.

"What is the message?"

"He said: Seven years ago the ship Cairncross was treacherously destroyed upon this coast and the captain and crew walked the plank."

The Shereef nodded slowly.

"I was one of the victims. Since then I have followed you like a Nemesis. I might have killed you a hundred times, but your hour had not yet come. That you may know who I am, and what you have to fear, I send you this."

The Malay handed him a metallic case, which, when opened, revealed the face of a young and handsome man in the dress of an officer of the U. S. Navy.

A wild cry burst from the lips of the Malay leader, and he dashed the picture to the earth and ground it beneath his heel.

"The curse of Mahmoud upon his head, it is my deadly enemy, and I have work to do, for of all men I have hated in my time, there is none whom I hated so much as this man. Where did you meet him?"

"On the deck of the Wave Witch."

"It is well. Here I take my stand, behind the walls I have built up, and will fight until I can fight no more against my enemies. Perhaps it would be better to fly and wait for better times. I did not dream that it was Arthur Carrington whom I met in the corridor—The villain still lives."

"We have no proas. The Spirit of the Wave has sunk them all and we cannot fly," said the captain.

"Look you, Malay. He who can bury his kreeese in the bosom of the man who sent me this message will have slain the Spirit of the Wave and until he is dead, there is no safety for the Malays."

"If I had known that," cried the Malay captain, "I would have slain him where he stood."

"Would that you had."

"I will do it now. Let me go back, and I swear by the spirit of my father that he has not long to live."

"Go, Owasso," said the chief, "but bear in mind that they will kill you."

"I am ready to die, if by so doing I can avenge the death of my brother."

The eyes of the Black Shereef gleamed with a strange light. If he could induce the Malay to kill this man, whom he so hated, it might be well with him yet.

"I will give you a message to him," said he, quickly, "and while he reads it, you can plant your steel in his heart."

He caught up pencil and paper from a table and wrote rapidly for five minutes. Then he folded and directed it to "Arthur Carrington; on board the Wave Witch." This note he handed to the Malay, and kissing the hand of his master, the devoted wretch retreated quickly and made his way toward the schooner. As before, he was received on board, and the Rajah, this time accompanied by Arthur Carrington, stepped forward to meet him.

"The message is not for you this time, Rajah of Gadong Beg," said the Malay. "It is to this man I must speak."

He pointed to Arthur as he spoke, and at the same time drew from the breast of his sarong the paper given him by his leader.

"I am to give this paper to the man known to the Malays as the Spirit of the Wave. Art thou he?" he asked.

"I do not know why I should hide it longer," replied Carrington. "Give me the letter; I am the man you seek."

"Wait. Art thou he who guides the spirit boat under the sea, which has been so long the Malay scourge?"

"Yes, yes," replied Arthur, impatiently. "I am the man."

"I wouldn't brag of it too much before the Malays," said the Rajah. "They ain't got any particular love for you, anyhow."

"I do not fear the Malays. Give me the letter."

"You have made many widows, Child of the Sea," said the Malay. "Do you never feel sad when you think of that?"

"Not when such wretches as you and your comrades suffer. Come; do not dally," was the impatient answer.

"The letter is yours," said the Malay, in a peculiar tone. "Take it."

Arthur snatched the paper eagerly and tore it open. At the first word, he gave a great cry and raised his hands to heaven.

"He lies!" he cried, fiercely, as he turned to the astounded Malay. "Tell him he lies like a dog, and that I said so. Will you do it?"

"I will speak, spirit," replied the Malay. "Read it to the end."

Arthur again cast his eyes upon the paper, when the Malay gathered himself like the black panther for his spring. A long kreeese flashed for a moment in the light, and before any one had time to interfere darted at the breast of the unsuspecting man. A cry of agony sprung to the lips of the Rajah as the murderer plunged into the sea and made his escape, swimming like a fish under water, and rising, but once before he gained the shore. Then, shaking the blade at the schooner, he darted away amid a

shower of musket balls. Once he staggered, as if hit, but recovering, gained shelter of the palace wall and disappeared from sight, while triumphant yells from the warriors on shore announced the delight they took in the red deed of their comrade.

"Bind up my arm, Tanais," he said to a comrade, extending his right arm, which had been pierced by a musket bullet. "This kreeese is red with the blood of the Spirit of the Wave. He will trouble us no more."

The palace rang with yells of delight, which quickly brought the Shereef to the spot, and Owasso drew his form proudly erect.

"It is done, Shereef," he said. "My kreeese pierced the heart of the Wave Spirit as he boasted of his deeds."

The chieftain drew from his finger a ring worth the ransom of a prince and pressed it upon the finger of the Malay.

"Take it," he said, "not as a reward, but as a remembrance that you have done a noble deed and one which may save us. Let us once drive away these dogs who beset us and I will think of a nobler reward. What do you want here, Zarina? I am not in a mood to talk with any save this chief, who has slain Arthur Carrington."

"Ha!"

The lips of the strange girl were parted and there was a wild look in her eyes. Something in the name, whatever it might be, had awokened her dormant memory.

"Arthur, Arthur," she murmured. "Where have I heard that name? What had his life to do with mine in the forgotten past? Killed, you say? Murdered by this man? Why was it done?"

She fingered the dagger in her belt in a convulsive way and looked at Owasso with threatening eyes, and he shrank back.

"There is death in her eyes. Oh, Shereef," he said, "I bid you beware of her."

"Woe to you if I remember," she cried, with a threatening gesture. "But for the present I let you go free."

She turned from them and passed into her own apartments, which were next to those of the Shereef. As she passed in she saw the Malays standing guard at the door of the room in which Nellie was imprisoned, and half paused.

"No, no," she murmured, "I cannot help her now, but the time is not far off. The measure of the crimes of the Shereef is nearly full and his fate is close at hand."

A letter lay on the floor near the door of her apartment, and she picked it up mechanically. It was the note sent on the arrow to the Shereef and she opened and read it.

"That name again—the name of a murdered man, which haunts me like a dream, but half forgotten! The Cairncross—what had I to do with that ship? My brain will go wild if I think of it, and I wonder that I did not kill Owasso when he boasted that he stabbed Arthur Carrington. Ha! the Shereef is here!"

She suddenly confronted the chief as he came through the hall with Owasso and the other Malay chiefs in the company, and showed them the open letter in her hand.

"Hear me, Shereef," she said, "you who alone know the story of my life, why is it that the name of Arthur Carrington and of the ship Cairncross awakens such strange memories? Speak."

"The girl is mad," cried the Shereef, recoiling, "and must be put under some restraint."

"Let no man touch me if he values life. I may be mad—I fear that it is true, but something impels me to demand an answer. Who am I, and what was he to me, this Arthur Carrington whose name is written here?"

He made a sudden spring and seized her by the wrists.

"Now, you tiger cat, I have you. No more of my men shall be killed in your mad fits."

CHAPTER XV.

THE BATTLE IN THE GATEWAY—NED STACEY'S SHOT—MARCO AND ARTHUR.

ZARINA struggled madly in the Shereef's grasp and tried to free herself, but he held her firmly, while he called Owasso to his aid, and they bound her, hand and foot.

"I almost wish that Arthur Carrington still lived," cried the Shereef, savagely, "that he might see me avenge myself. Away with her, Owasso; put her in that strong room where the white girl was, lock the door, and give me the key."

Zarina was thrown into the room indicated, and the door locked upon her.

"She is secure, at least. Now tell me again

what you have done, Owasso," demanded the sea rover.

"I gave him the kreeese after he had read the paper. He cried out, 'Tell him he lies like a dog' and I struck him. Then I plunged into the water and made my escape by swimming."

"You have done nobly. Hark; what is that sound?"

"It is the shout of the advancing men, my master," replied the Malay chief. "The enemy comes to assail us."

"My armor there," cried the Shereef. "Where is my sword? ah, here it is."

He caught down a shirt of fine mail from the wall and put it on quickly. Five minutes later, with his sword in his hand and pistols in his belt, he rushed out and joined his men, who were in the outer court, resting on their arms. The attacking force had already landed, and were marching to the attack. In front came the crew of the Tokio, armed with cutlasses and pistols, and headed by Harry and Ned Stacey. Behind them came the men of the Rajah, in three divisions, variously armed, but in good condition, and full of fight.

"Boarders away!" yelled Ned Stacey. "All you Tokios prepare to board."

With a revolver in each hand the Tokio's men charged straight up to the gate of the palace, no one drawing his cutlass yet, and waiting for the appearance of the enemy before they opened fire. Grouped within the doorway, their weapons in their hands, stood the grim Malay followers of the Shereef, and a withering volley was poured into the ranks of the advancing sailors. Every man fell, but the wild cries of delight had scarcely ceased to sound when they were on their feet again and on the charge. They had only obeyed a command from Harry when they dropped to escape the first volley, and they were too near the gate to give the enemy a chance to reload.

"Give it to them, lads!" cried Harry. "Let them see what Yankee tars can do!"

The revolvers began to crack, and, aimed at the crowded ranks within the gateway, did awful execution. At close quarters the revolver is a terrible weapon and one which the Malays had never yet seen in use. They fell in heaps, and the Tokios charged up to the very gateway, when they found foemen worthy of their steel.

In the center of the gateway stood the Black Shereef, a sword in his right hand and a long dagger in his left. His face was still concealed, but his figure was so commanding that all knew that the chief was before them.

A terrible battle took place in the gateway. Three men in succession, who encountered the pirate leader, fell under his trenchant blade, until Harry, thrusting the others aside, boldly assailed him.

"Welcome—oh, welcome!" cried the hoarse voice of the Shereef. "I have looked for you long, my son."

The blades hissed together and the pirate fought confidently, as a man fights who feels that victory is only a question of time. But scarcely had they exchanged a dozen passes when he knew that if he conquered Harry Castleton he must put out all his skill. His men were hard put to it to hold the gate, for the sailors were pressing them warmly and giving them all they could do. It was only by sheer force of numbers that they were able to hold back the Tokio's men, and the forces of the Rajah were rapidly pressing up to join in the attack.

"Make way there, make way," cried a sharp, imperious voice. "The Black Shereef is mine; let no one dare to touch him!"

As he heard that voice the Shereef trembled and his point sunk, for it was the voice of Arthur Carrington. Harry took advantage of the moment to make a furious thrust, which struck him fully on the breast, and the cutlass snapped like a reed upon the woven mail. With a cry of delight the chief drew back his elbow for a fatal thrust, when a cutlass interposed and threw up the blade.

"Out of the way, captain. Find a sword and pitch in somewhere else."

It was stout Ned Stacey who spoke.

"You are a nice duck, I don't think," he said, as he fired a revolver straight at the breast of the Shereef. "That will try your mail, I reckon."

The Shereef staggered back and fell, and the Tokio's men darted forward to secure him. But the Malays, roused to desperation, charged furiously and actually swept the sailors out of the gateway. Owasso caught up the chief and raised him.

"There, there," he said, quietly; "I'll be all right in a moment. Retreat into the palace."

The Malays made a rush, bearing the Shereef in their midst, and before the Tokios could realize what they were doing, their enemies were safely ensconced behind the iron-studded door of the palace. When the edifice was erected the Shereef had such an attack as this in mind, and it was built like a fort. The doors were of a sort of native wood, stronger than oak and nearly three feet thick. The walls were eight feet through, built of huge blocks of stone, and the lower windows were mere loopholes. The moment they were inside a fire was opened from the windows, which quickly drove the sailors behind the protection of the outer walls.

"We'll have to land a howitzer, Rajah," said Harry.

"That's all very well, mate," was the reply, "but you seem to forget that we don't know where the gal is confined. A stray shot might hit her."

Harry's countenance fell.

"That is true, Rajah," he asserted. "What had we better do?"

"Them doors look tough, I tell you, Harry, but we've got to get inside, somehow."

At this moment they were hailed from the upper part of the palace, and saw the Shereef standing at a window.

"I want to see the Rajah of Gadong Beg," he said.

"Waal, you can't see him," roared that worthy. "He's too modest and retiring, and he won't show up. What do you want to say?"

"I offer you twenty thousand dollars in gold and all the prisoners I have taken except the lady, if you will go your way and leave us in peace."

"Can't be did, squire. You see, we've set our mark high, and can't give it up at a less figure."

"You cannot get in; our doors are too strong," was the confident reply.

"We'll try the virtue of a howitzer and see about that," answered the Rajah.

"Try it, if you will, but I swear to you that wherever you direct your fire, at that place I will place the girl, and the same balls which demolish our walls will be death to her."

"By George!" gasped the Rajah. "And the thief will do it, too."

"Get the howitzer ashore just the same," said Harry. "It may frighten them when they see it. You'd better let Ned Stacey attend to that."

Ned departed on his mission, and Marco approached the Rajah and made a communication in his signs. He gave vent to a long whistle.

"Do you think you could do it, Marco? You know the secret passages."

The Malay bowed gravely.

"I've a good mind to let you try it, and yet you know what will happen if you are taken. They will be on the look-out for you."

Marco took his tablets and wrote:

"I shall not be taken; you may be sure of that, for I have a kreece and can kill myself."

"Better do that than fall alive into the hands of the Black Shereef. But you can't do anything before dark."

Marco wrote again:

"It is near at hand. Get the big gun and make a big fire in front of the palace, and they will not dare to come out and I can do my work."

Marco stepped back, when a hand was laid upon his arm, and Arthur Carrington stood before him. The kreece of Owasso had failed in its work.

"Do you think I will suffer it, Marco?" he said. "No; if you go, I must go with you, as I did before."

Marco regarded him intently for a moment, and caught up his tablets.

"You have a brave heart, Scourge of the Malays," he wrote. "Is it not enough that one should take the chance of throwing away his life?"

"No; I will not suffer you to enter the palace alone," was the answer.

Making a sign of assent, Marco took his way along the wall out of sight of the palace, and the two disappeared in one of the alleys in the rear, bound upon a desperate enterprise.

CHAPTER XVI.

AFTER MANY DAYS—TOM REID'S SELFSACRIFICE.

MARCO advanced like a man who knew the course he must take, and Arthur Carrington glided like a ghost close behind him. They plunged into the thicket in the rear of the palace and reach a place where a heap of huge

stones were piled up, apparently blocks which had been rejected by the workmen in building the palace. Marco mounted to the top of the pile and laying his hand upon the point of one of the blocks, gave it a push. The stone receded and the Mute saw before him a flight of stone steps, tending downward. They entered at once, and replacing the stone by a touch, began to advance through a passage just wide enough to permit a man to pass easily. The mute glided on with a step as noiseless as that of a cat until his course was stopped by a wall, upon which he laid his hand, and began to feel along the projections. All at once a clicking sound was heard, and they could see beyond a dimly-lighted room, which was apparently untenanted.

"Look to your weapons, Marco," whispered Arthur, in the ear of the Malay. "Remember that there is no mercy for us, if we are taken."

Marco pressed his hand and made no reply, as they stepped into the room. Scarcely had they done so when the sense of hearing, which was developed in this strange man to a wonderful degree, warned him that there was something in the room beside them, and he paused, laying his hand upon Arthur's breast to keep him back. A moment later Marco sprung to a corner of the room and was engaged in a desperate struggle with some one. Arthur darted to the door, and having satisfied himself that it was closed, opening the slide of a small lantern which he carried, and which, by the mere act of opening the slide, was lighted by a chemical contrivance of his own invention. Marco was down upon the floor, his knees upon the breast of a prostrate figure in whom they recognized Tom Reid, the man whom we last saw cast into the den of the panthers by order of his infamous chief. The crease in the hand of Marco gleamed blue in the light of the lantern and was about to fall, when Carrington arrested his arm.

"Do not strike," he whispered, hurriedly. "This is the lieutenant of that base wretch, and he may be of service to us."

"I am his friend no more," replied Reid. "I thank God, Arthur Carrington, that your death will not be counted against me at my dying day."

"You know me, then?"
"I have never forgotten your face as you went down with the rest of the passengers and crew of the Cairncross, from the fatal plank. I did all I could for you, too, in loosening the bonds upon your arms, and as God is my judge, if I could have saved all those innocent men, I would have done so."

"But you have followed this wretch ever since," said Arthur, doubtfully.

"Followed him; I have been his slave from that hour, but in the midst of my evil deeds, I have paused sometimes to curse myself because I did it. The man has been my curse through life, and yet, after all I have done for him, because I drew my sword to defend a brave woman, he had me thrown into the panthers' den, to be torn in pieces by them. But for Zarina—"

He paused and looked at the Avenger in a strange way.

"What of her; who is Zarina?" demanded Arthur.

"A brave woman, who, by the power she has gained over these savage beasts, saved my life. You had better spare me now and let me work for you, and when all is done, kill me if you will; I deserve no better fate at your hands."

"You will not turn traitor?" "Ask Marco, who is a reader of men's thoughts. Look in my face, Marco, and then tell Arthur Carrington whether he may trust me or not."

Marco released him and they rose, facing each other. For several minutes the burning gaze of Marco was fixed upon his face, and then he turned to Arthur.

"Shall we trust him, Marco?" "The Malay bowed gravely, and Arthur Carrington extended his hand to his new ally.

"Let us be friends, Reid," he said, "I believe you when you say that the wrong you did me was in a measure enforced, for I know that this demon had a wonderful power over you. Now let us work. We are here to see if it is possible to get Ellen Darrel out of the hands of this ruffian before we begin the attack."

Reid shook his head gravely. "It is a hard task. Even I, knowing the interior of the palace as I do, have been repeatedly in danger since Zarina got me out of the panthers' den. But we will do all we can, and perhaps it may be done. Let me think a minute."

He stood in deep thought for some time and at last raised his head.

"If I could find Zarina we would know where the prisoner is confined. Let me go alone and take the chances. In the confusion which now reigns, I may be able to do something."

He had scarcely spoken when a low whistle sounded in the corridor outside.

"By heaven," he cried, "I believe Zarina is there, and if she is, and is not suspected, all may yet be well."

He darted to the door and flung it open, while Arthur closed the slide of the lantern.

"Hist," answered Tom Reid. "Is that you, Zarina?"

"Are you there, Shereef Reid?" replied the musical voice, of the mad princess. "Yes; step into this room."

Zarina glided in and closed the door.

"You are not alone, Shereef Reid," she said, suspiciously, making out the forms of the two strangers in the half light of the room.

"These are friends, Zarina," replied Tom Reid. "Wait; I have a hope in my heart which may fail, but if it does not, I can make amends for a great wrong done you years ago. Do not speak, sir, but listen. Zarina, can you remember nothing of your past life?"

"Only confusedly at times," she answered, pressing her hands upon her forehead. "There are times when I seem to be sailing on the ocean in a great ship, and then I see black proas, with the flag of the Shereef above them, hear the sound of battle, and after that all is dark."

"Nothing more?"

"Your face is mixed with my dreams, together with the Black Shereef, and I see a man in a uniform of blue, wearing a cap with gilt cord and letters on the front. See, Shereef Reid; I found a letter to-day which had the name of a ship which troubles me strangely."

"The name of the ship," cried Arthur Carrington. "Speak it quickly."

"The Cairncross. Ha, who is it that speaks!"

"I told you to be silent, sir," cried Reid. "You may ruin all."

"What is this which is boiling in my brain?" cried Zarina, pressing her hands again upon her throbbing temples. "Let him speak again."

With a wild cry, Arthur Carrington sprung the slide of the lantern, and faced her.

"Vision from another world," he whispered, "shall I call you Edith Carlyle?"

"The name!" she gasped. "The name I bore in the forgotten past. And your name—speak, and see if I can remember."

"Ha, Zarina!" hissed a voice close to her ear.

"Have we traitors here? I will tell the Shereef."

There was a flutter of female garments, and some one was heard running through the long passages beyond. Marco sprung after her, for he knew that if the woman escaped they were in danger. But the two, who stood staring at one another in the flaring light saw nothing, except each other's face.

"I am Arthur Carrington," he whispered. "Can you remember?"

It struck a pang into the heart of Tom Reid as he saw her fling herself into the arms of the man who had loved her so well. In that moment reason came back, and she remembered all. Bad as he was, Reid had loved her honestly and well, and had protected her from wrong many a time. But the sound of hurrying feet broke the silence, and Marco came flying back. The quick motion of his hands told that the woman had escaped.

"Into the passage," cried Reid. "I will show you the way out, for you must escape at once."

Arthur Carrington raised the half-insensible form of his restored love in his arms, and hurried into the passage. Reid followed, and Marco also stepped through, but within the door he stopped and drew his long kreece. Bending his knee at the feet of Arthur Carrington, he seemed to ask his blessing, and Arthur understood that he would remain to impale himself in order that they might escape, and to keep the passage open for the others.

"You are a brave man, Marco," said Arthur. "In my new happiness, I had almost forgotten that there were others to be saved. Reid, to you I intrust her. Take her safely to the Rajah and tell him that we are here, to keep this passage open, and you must guide him on the way."

"I will not go without you," she cried. "I have lost you too long, Arthur."

"I will stay," said Reid, quietly.

"Go, and go quickly, for I hear the sound of feet already."

Arthur saw that they were wasting time. "God be with you men," he cried. "Away, Edith; I will follow."

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO STRONG MEN—THE MASK REMOVED.
MARCO silently extended his hand to Tom Reid. Before he had been dismembered by order of the Black Shereef they had been good friends, and had fought side by side in battle with the Burmese.

"We will die together," said Reid, as he drew his sword, of which he had not been deprived when hurled into the den of the panthers. "Here they come."

There was a rush of many feet, the rattle of arms and there poured into the room at least fifty Malays, carrying swords, guns and torches. By their light they saw the secret door standing open and inside the immovable forms of the two brave men who were there to defend it.

"Upon them," cried the Black Shereef, choking with passion. "Hew them down, for if they keep the door until they get help we are doomed."

And now followed one of those Homeric battles for which history has no niche, and yet which deserve a place far above many deeds there set down. Two men, one a Malay, the other a white man, stood side by side in a righteous cause, ready to do manful battle. They had this advantage, that not more than two could attack them at once; and two determined men, desperate and careless of their lives, could hold others at bay for a long time, no matter what their numbers.

"Are you there, Tom Reid?" hissed the Shereef. "Again I have been deceived by those whom I have trusted. Ten thousand curses on your head. I thought your bones were cracking under the jaws of my panthers."

"I have an account to settle with you first," replied Reid, swaying his blade with the ease of long practice. "Why do you hesitate, why don't you come on?"

Two men hurled themselves upon the bold pair, their kreeses gleaming purple under the glare of the torches. A quick cut from the krees of Marco, a thrust in low tierce from Tom Reid, and they are down, never to see the deep sea waves again, or hear the waters splashing under the bows of their proas. Their places were quickly filled and two more of the Sea Rovers had looked their last upon the sky. Furious with rage, they crowded in together, only to impede each other more and more, and offer themselves an easy sacrifice to the keen blades of the defenders of the passage.

"Rush in there," roared the Shereef, "or make way for those who can do better work. Ha! By heaven, the enemy have opened fire in front."

As he spoke there came a thundering crash, as a six pound shot plunged into the heavy door of the palace. Then it was that the Shereef realized that he had wasted too much time in trying to force these men from their places, and was attacked in front and rear.

"To the front," he cried. "Where are your pistols, men; shoot them down."

At that order the defenders stepped behind an angle of the passage, which took a sharp turn just beyond the concealed door, where they could not be reached by a pistol shot. The Malays crowded through the opening, but as soon as a head showed beyond the angle the owner fell, cloven to the jaws, or pierced to the heart. Leaving the Malays to continue the combat, the Shereef bounded up the narrow stairway, and just at the head flung open a door. There sat Nellie Darrel, her head bent in prayer, listening to the roar of the howitzer, and hoping at each moment that the strong door would go down. He rushed in and caught her in a savage grasp.

"Come with me," he cried. "These dogs shall know that I am not playing with them."

"What are you going to do?" she answered, struggling with him. "You villain, loose your hold."

"Come, I say! I have set my all upon this cast and I will win or perish. Come on."

The walls seemed to rock as he dragged her through the hall, and the rapid reports showed that more than one cannon was at work. Still he kept upward, ordering his men to stand their ground and defend the hall if the door went down. At last, he dragged her, panting and exhausted, through the opening to the roof, where he pushed her out in full view of the crew of the Tokio, who were working three six-pound cannons with determined zeal. And behind them, stimulating the crew to work rapidly, he saw Harry Castleton. A roar of recognition came up from below.

"There she is, lads," shouted Ned Stacey.

"Three cheers for our little beauty; give 'em with a will!"

"Hold your fire," screamed the Shereef, raising his hand. "Let another shot strike the door, and I will hurl her down upon the paving of the court-yard, and you may have your beauty then."

"The bloody dog would do it," muttered Ned Stacey. "Oh, just wait; I've got something cooking for you, pirate."

"Order your men to cease firing, Captain Castleton. It will be better for you and this girl if you do."

"Are you ready to treat?" demanded Harry. "Yes, but not on your terms. I must dictate them, or I will kill her."

"Cease firing," said Harry waving his hand to the men.

"Only one round more, captain," said the gallant tar working the gun nearest to them, "and down goes the door to their old shebang."

"He would keep his word, Carey, for the man is desperate. Now then, state your terms, you villain."

"I and my men to march out and take our way out to the interior of the island unharmed," said the Shereef.

"If you have not murdered any prisoners in your hands—granted."

"To take with us whatever property rightfully belongs to us."

"That would not be much, but it is granted also."

"We to deliver up into your hands, safe and unharmed, all the prisoners in our possession; not including this lady."

"You know well that we will not treat on such terms. The first article of any agreement must be her surrender," replied Harry.

"So be it, then, but there is one thing I must insist upon, that you give up to me the woman who escaped from my palace to-night, the one who has been known among us as Zarina."

"Ha; go on."

"Also two fugitives from our band, Tom Reid and the Malay chief, known as Marco."

"Are these your terms?"

"Yes, and they are the best you can get." "Refuse them, Harry," cried Nellie, bravely. "I would sooner die a thousand deaths than put that noble woman in his power again. Pirate, thief, murderer—I defy you! Fire at the door, Harry—down with it. I will make him some work before he can haul me down."

And with a quick motion she wrenched herself free from the grasp of her captor and began to run about the roof with great swiftness, laughing at his threats and curses. Suddenly she turned and bounded through the opening in the roof into the room below. As she did so the outer door, literally torn from its hinges by the crashing fire poured into it, fell into the hallway, crushing two or three men as it came down, and the crew of the Tokio, with wild battle yells, came rushing on to the charge.

The Black Shereef had leaped through the opening in pursuit of the flying girl, but she had darted into one of the narrow halls and passed from room to room, and in the din of the battle he could not judge by her footsteps which way she had fled. Just as the door came down he heard the detonation of firearms in the rooms below, and soon the Malays who had been attacking Marco and Tom Reid came pouring out, assailed by a strong force, headed by the Yankee Rajah and Arthur Carrington.

The hall of the palace was perhaps two hundred feet in length. In the middle stood the desperate Malay band, half of them facing the hall and struggling to keep back the rush of the men of the Tokio, and the rest confronting Carrington and the men of Gadong Beg. In the fore front of this last band the Shereef took his stand, with a drawn sword in his hand.

"Throw away your mask, Richard Manton," cried Carrington. "You need it no more."

"You are right," replied the man whom we have known as the Black Shereef. "Now you see me."

It was the same handsome, devilish face which we have seen upon the Bund at Shanghai before the sailing of the Tokio—the face of Richard Manton!

"Give us a little breathing space before you attack, Arthur Carrington. Of all men I had not expected you to rise from the dead. I thought you went down with the shattered hull of the Cairncross until we met below, and then I thought Owasso had killed you."

"I live to be avenged on you, for the steel of your Malay assassin failed in its work. More than that, I have saved my darling from your hands, and thank that Providence which robbed

her of her reason and kept her pure. Enough! Do you surrender?"

"Surrender! I will die where I stand and only wish I could get Edith Carlyle into my hands again long enough to take revenge upon her. Take that!"

He suddenly fired a pistol at point blank range, but not so suddenly but Arthur Carrington, who had been watching him, had time to bow his head. Then began the desperate battle, where no quarter was asked and none given, and Arthur Carrington and Richard Manton engaged hand to hand.

Both were finished swordsmen, and no man on either side interfered while they played as coolly as if they had been fencing for a prize. Headless of the battle raging about them, they fought on, the sparks flying from their blades as they clashed together. Twice Arthur had made a disengagement and as many times touched his enemy, but the third time he came within distance he lunged home. It was only the mail shirt he wore which saved Richard Manton's life, for the point struck him full in the breast, so furiously that it hurled him to the ground, and before he could recover, the foot of his enemy was on his breast and the point at his throat. Then half a dozen Malays, seeing the danger of their chief, burled themselves in a body upon Arthur and forced him from the prostrate form of Manton, who bounded again to his feet, and before they could stop him, sprung through a side door into the large banquet hall and from thence into the lower part of the building, locking all the doors behind him as he fled.

"I will fool the dogs yet," he muttered. "Now for the other passage. Oh, if I could only meet with Ellen Darrel now."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AGAIN A CAPTIVE—THE AVENGER ON THE TRACK—MARCO TAKES REVENGE.

As he spoke a door was flung open and Nellie Darrel darted in, and before she could turn to flee he had her in his grasp, with his dagger at her breast.

"Utter a sound and you are dead, girl," he hissed. "By all the Malay gods, fortune is not all against me, since you are in my power."

Throwing off the heavy scarf which he wore, he muffled her face quickly and darted into the room in which she had been confined when visited by Marco. The secret door was quickly found and they passed through, closing the door carefully behind him and setting the spring so that it could not be opened from the other side. Then, raising her again in his arms, he bore her on for some distance in the darkness, when he stopped, and, taking off his belt, bound her hand and foot.

"So far good, my beauty. Now, then, let us have light so that I can look at you," he sneered. "A match was lighted and a small lamp which was placed in a niche in the wall illuminated the room. It was close and damp, and had evidently been used as a prison, for a rusty chain was attached to the wall upon one side. He placed her in a sitting position against the wall, and stood regarding her with a frowning brow.

"I wonder why I have spared you so long, Nellie Darrel," he said, in a bitter tone. "Look at me and see to what love for you has reduced me. Only a few short days ago I reigned here as a prince; all men bowed to my will and Malays paid me tribute and furnished me men and arms. I have risked all for your sweet sake, and have lost all, save you. I have you in my power at last."

"You cannot escape and take me with you," she answered, in a spirited tone.

"Do you think so, my lady? In that you are deceived. For years I have been turning my wealth into jewels, until I have two millions upon my person. I shall escape and take you with me, and in another land we shall be happy together."

"You have me in your power and can kill me," was the reply, "but I will never be your wife."

"You say so now, but I shall find a means to bend you to my will. This is not the only land in which the Malay has power, and once among them, woe to you if you dare to refuse my hand. Something worse than wedding me may follow."

Nellie made no reply, and he left the room with a hurried step, and was gone for nearly an hour. Then he came back, an exultant look upon his face.

"Everything is ready," he answered. "The road to the mountain is clear, and in half an hour we shall be on the way."

He removed the bands from her feet and raised her, and still clasping her wrist, led her through the long passages.

"When this palace was constructed those secret passages were built. Two of them were known to Marco, but the men who knew of this passage were killed after its completion, and the knowledge died with them. Now then, my lady, I must stop your mouth."

He hastily formed a gag with a silken cord and the handle of his dagger, and effectually guarded against any outcry upon her part. Having taken this precaution, he led her up a short flight of steps, touched a spring, and opened a trap door which led into a small building in the rear of the palace, used for the storage of munitions of war. Before leaving the building he opened the door a little and looked out to satisfy himself that the coast was clear before making any movement to escape.

"All safe," he whispered. "Now then, we will go."

They stepped out of the building together, and Nellie cast an anxious look in the direction of the palace, which was lighted up and many forms flitting here and there before the windows. She knew that her father and her lover were there, and prayed that they might quickly take up the trail of the villain who had her in his power, and run him to earth.

He smiled scornfully as he made his way through the deserted place, dragging her with him, and keeping a watchful eye for every possible event. His eyes gleamed strangely in the light of the moon and he muttered to himself: "I have escaped them all save Marco, but my life is not safe a moment while that black dog cumbers the earth. Why did I not kill him while I had him in my power, instead of cutting out his false tongue? I have learned a lesson: dead men tell no tales."

He stopped suddenly in the edge of a little wood, and a shudder passed through his frame. He felt chilled to the very marrow, a feeling for which he could not account. Perhaps the shadow of his approaching fate fell on him at that moment. Why did he think of Marco now, when he was about to triumph? He knew that on the other side of the point, scarcely two miles away, a swift cat-rigged boat was riding at anchor, provided for just such an emergency as this. The question now was, would Tom Reid remember the precaution he had taken and attempt to cut him off. It might be, and as the thought came to him he hurried the steps of his captive and in half an hour they stood upon a ridge, looking down upon the little bay where the boat lay at anchor. He drew a long sigh of relief as he found the craft safe.

"You don't know how much relieved I feel," he averred, turning to Nellie. "The traitor Reid knew that this boat lay here, and I am inclined to think that he has been killed, or he would have sent some one to secure it, and so prevent my escape. It is a beautiful night for a sail, and long before they suspect where we are gone we shall be out of their reach."

He released his hold on her wrist for a moment as he stopped to look back toward the palace and instantly the brave girl sprung away, running like a deer over the path they had lately traversed. He gave utterance to a savage oath and bounded after her, but scarcely had he taken a dozen steps when he saw in his path a giant figure, which he knew too well, the form of Marco the Mute, his eyes blazing like stars in the night. Brave as Richard Manton undoubtedly was, the sight of that ominous figure utterly appalled him, and with a cry of fear he whirled upon his heel and ran toward the boat. As he turned he saw that a dozen men were hurrying down the slope and that foremost among them were Arthur Carrington, Tom Reid, Harry Castleton and Saul Belton."

He was perhaps a hundred paces in advance of Marco when he turned to fly, and he had been noted for fleetness of foot. Surely he could reach the boat in time and so escape his enemy. But it was nearly a quarter of a mile to the boat and the Malay was tireless and fleet as a stag. Perhaps it would be better to turn and fight it out than to run further, and even as he ran he loosened his revolvers and prepared to fight, although he knew the desperate man pursuing was an awful foe with whom to contend. The beat of his coming feet sounded ominously near, and yet he was close to the shore, and he might reach it in time to save himself.

"Follow them close," cried Arthur Carrington. "If Marco gets to him first I would not give a sea-shell for Manton's chance of long life."

Still the doomed man ran on, with his savage

enemy in close pursuit. Once he looked over his shoulder and calculated the distance and his right hand closed upon the butt of his revolver. Then he wheeled suddenly when close to the shore and fired shot after shot, Marco bounding from side to side to disconcert his aim, but continuing to advance. He held the last shot until scarcely ten feet separated them, and knew that the Malay was hit, but it did not stop him, and with a snarl like that of an angry tiger, Marco sprung upon him and struck one stunning blow with his clinched hand which laid his enemy senseless at his feet. Then, to the surprise of all, he caught the senseless form in his arms and ran into the water, placing the body in a boat, and cutting the anchor rope with his kreeese, he sprung in, and before any one could reach the shore had passed through the line of surf and gained the open sea.

"God help him," cried Carrington, covering his face, "much as I hate Richard Manton I can only pray that Marco struck him dead by that blow, for he will get no mercy at the hands of the Malay."

Marco, with his hand upon the tiller, ran out until he had left the shore a league behind and Manton recovered from his swoon to find his hands bound, and Marco looking at him with ferocious joy imprinted on his face.

"You have won, Marco," he said, bitterly, "and of all men I have wronged I hoped to avoid you. What do you mean to do with me?"

The Malay answered by a look so savage that the prisoner shuddered through all his frame. There was a terrible menace in that burning glance.

"Do you mean to murder me? Make some sign; do something, that I may know my fate," pleaded Manton.

Marco pointed to his tongueless mouth in a way which the villain understood but too well. All the suffering which the Mute had endured would be repaid a hundred-fold.

"Look you, Marco," said the prisoner, quickly; "I can give you wealth enough to make you a prince, if you will set me free."

Marco laughed and thrusting his hand under the folds of his sarong, drew out the belt which contained the precious gems which were the result of years of robbery on the high seas. Then Manton understood that his plan of buying his safety was useless, and he uttered a hollow groan.

"You are a coward, Marco," he cried, angrily. "Free my hands, give me a weapon, and fight me like a man."

Marco only answered by the same bitter smile.

"I have never heard of a Malay prince who was so faint-hearted that he dared not meet his enemy in battle," cried Manton. "Dog, coward, slave, I spit at and defy you. May your father's grave be defiled."

With a howl like that of a mad beast, the Malay turned the head of the boat toward a point perhaps a league away, and refusing to notice Manton even by a sign, he ran the boat up on the shore and dragged his enemy out. Then Manton saw that he was wounded and the breast of his white sarong was stained with fresh blood. Once upon the sand he flung down the bag of gems upon the beach, cut the cords upon the hands and feet of his enemy and put a kreeese in his hand. Then, raising one hand as if in appeal to his gods, he whirled his kreeese in the air and rushed at Manton with the swift leap of a panther.

The last ball sent by the hand of Manton had pierced the Malay through the right shoulder, and only such a man could have stood up under the grievous hurt. Manton saw that he was badly wounded, and he thought that he could conquer even Marco after the loss of so much blood, and all his native hardihood came back as the kreeses hissed together. Each knew that it was a battle to the death, and put forth all their skill and strength. But Marco, knowing well that the battle must be short, caught Manton by the left wrist and they stood foot to foot, giving and taking awful wounds without a groan. They sunk to the earth together striking dreadful blows, and the sand was red with their flowing blood but still the desperate enemies fought on under the light of the moon. At length, leaning on his elbow, for he had not the strength to rise, Marco struck a last blow and fell senseless.

The party in pursuit, who had followed them along the shore, came running up five minutes later. They saw Manton lying on his back, the sand all gory about him, still clasping in his nerveless hand the blade with which he had fought so well, while Marco lay face downward, his hand still clutching the hilt of the kreeese,

which, with a last effort, he had buried in the heart of his foe. After many years he had avenged the shameful mutilation which he had suffered at the hands of Richard Manton.

Arthur Carrington came up and looked steadfastly at the handsome face of the dead man, who, even as he lay, wore a mocking smile upon his lips.

"My deadly enemy has gone, and after all mine was not the hand to strike the blow which laid him low. Well, be it so; he wore a villain's heart under the form of an Apollo. Friends, let us bury him here where he fell."

The party silently set to work and scooped out a shallow grave, in which they were about to lay him, when an aged Malay stepped out of the woods and came toward them. At the sight of this venerable personage Reid called to them to stop, and the man addressed him in the Malay tongue pointing again and again to the body.

"This is the High Priest of the Sun Worshippers, gentlemen," said Reid, turning to the others. "And he asks for this body, to give it to the flames, after the manner of their worship."

"Did Manton belong to their order?" asked Carrington.

"No man knew better than he how to keep the love of this people. See."

He parted the clothing of the dead man, and there, upon his breast, blazed the symbol of the Order of the Sun.

"Let them take him," said Arthur. "Better that his ashes should be scattered to the four winds of heaven than leave a trace behind."

The High Priest gave a signal, and a hundred men came pacing from the wood, each bearing upon the front of his white robe the mystic symbol of their faith. They carried among them a litter, upon which they placed the body. Then, uttering a low wailing chant, they bore the body to the east, and were seen no more.

CHAPTER XIX.

TOM REID'S REFORMATION—MATED AND MARRIED—A HAPPY END.

WHEN the battle was ended in the palace, and the last of the Malays had fallen—for they took no quarter—and Harry was making a frantic search for his lost Nellie, a party of the Tokio's men assailed Tom Reid, who cast away his sword and faced them, with his arms folded on his breast.

"You're the cuss that shipped aboard the Tokio under false colors and stole Miss Nellie," roared Ned Stacey. "Take up your sword and fight it out like a man."

"Yes, I am the man," was the reply. "Kill me, for I deserve no better at your hands."

Half a dozen blades were raised against him, when Edith Carlysle—Zarina no more—rushed before the lifted weapons.

"No, no, no!" she cried. "This man must not be harmed, for he has been a true friend to me. Help him, Arthur."

"Put up your swords, men," said Carrington, striking up the blades. "This man has been promised safety, and he shall have it."

"Let them finish me, Arthur," pleaded Tom, sadly. "I have little to live for now."

"No you don't," said Saul Belton, striding in. "You've got the making of a man in you and I want you myself. Now, Edith, tell the men what he has done."

"You understand as much as this, men, that seven years ago the fleet of the Black Shereef took the ship Cairncross, of which my father was captain, and made me a prisoner. I saw my father and my lover die, as I thought, and the sight drove me mad. I know now that Tom Reid, the lieutenant of the Black Shereef, loosened the bonds upon Arthur's arms so that he kept himself afloat after he left the fatal plank, until picked up by Saul Belton. As for me, I was treated as a queen, and bad as Richard Manton was, he dared not wrong one who had lost her senses, for that the Malays would not have endured even from him. In the years I have been here this man has been my constant friend, and braved Manton when he would have had me shot down in cold blood. For this he was cast into the den of the panthers, but I, whom only the black beasts obeyed, saved him from them. No one shall harm Tom Reid while I live, for he will be a good man yet."

"Yes, God helping me, while I live I will never do an act which an honest sailor need blush at. But where is Ellen Darrel?" cried Reid.

"We can't find her, and the Black Shereef has escaped," said one of the men.

"Then he has her in his power again. Come with me; there is but one way in which he can escape. Marco, he is making for the boat in the east cove."

The party took weapons and ran, headed by Marco, and the result we know.

As the Malays were made to understand that they would not be harmed, they began to return, and all looked in wonder at the Mystery as she lay idly on the water by the side of the Wave Witch. A few words will explain the part she had taken in the action of this tale. Arthur Carrington was a lieutenant in the United States Navy, attached to the department of Submarine Arts. He had made this branch a study, and before the taking of the Cairncross had dreamed of such a craft as this. After being picked up by the Yankee Rajah, a man well known in those seas, he had devoted his time and ability to the construction of the Mystery, and had so perfected her that he could run her for a long distance just below the surface and had made her a powerful aid in the destruction of pirate shipping.

"I believed that Edith was dead," he said, "or I should have saved her long ago. I had just got my craft in working order when the Black Shereef attacked the Tokio, and was more than satisfied with the result."

"There is one thing I'd like to ask," said Tom Reid, "and that is how you managed to blow up the proas the other day, when you were not near them with the Torpedo?"

"But I had been under them all, and attached a clockwork torpedo, calculated to explode in twenty minutes," replied Arthur laughing.

"Just so. It was nothing but science after all. Then I suppose that when the Wave Witch moved off without a wind you were towing her?"

"Exactly. The mission of the Mystery is accomplished here, and I mean to give her to my friend, the Rajah, if he only has a man with knowledge enough to run her. It was an experiment, and I had to take a risk. The motive power is electricity, of course."

"It'll be three months afore any of you will be allowed to leave Gadong Beg, I tell you," cried Saul Belton, "and while you're a-waitin' you kin teach a man I know how to run the Mystery. He's got the nerve all right."

"And who is the man?" asked Arthur, smiling.

"Here he is," replied Saul Belton, laying his hand upon the shoulder of Tom Reid. "Here's a boy that's gone a little astray, but he's goin' to be a man now an' I'm a-goin' to help him. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must go an' look arter Marco. He's badly hurt, but he's a tough coon, that Malay, and you'll see him pull through."

Two days after this the fleet sailed from the harbor, bound for Gadong Beg. They had scarcely landed when the Yankee Rajah sent away the Wave Witch on a secret mission, under command of Jim Slocum. In the course of two weeks she returned and brought a clerical-looking young man, who turned out to be a missionary who had been laboring among the Javan heathen, and had been enticed away by the Rajah.

"You critters don't seem to understand jest what's wanted to make a complete thing of this," he said, "and now I've fixed it fur you. Thar's a minister, an' if we can't git up a weddin' in all this crowd, then I'd like to know the reason."

It did not need much persuasion on the part of Arthur Carrington to convince Edith that she could be happy as his wife, and both of them were alone in the world. From the arrival of the minister and the announcement that Arthur and Edith would be married in a week, Harry had seemed quite unhappy, but before the time arrived he had succeeded in convincing both Mr. Darrel and Nellie that it was as well to make a double wedding of it, and when Arthur and Edith had been married the other young couple took their places and were made man and wife. Saul Belton was perfectly resplendent, and the village was given up to feasting for several days.

It was decided that Tom Reid should remain at Gadong Beg, for the Rajah had been absent from his country too long to care to return to it, but he promised that some time he would come to America and pay his friends a visit. Before they sailed he presented the fair brides with jewels such as never had been seen in the United States before. It was a sad parting, but at last the Tokio sailed, leaving the China seas forever—for the spoils of the Rajah's palace had been too great to make another voyage necessary. Both Arthur and Harry were busy men, how-

ever, and at once started a great commercial firm in the city of New York, which soon took a leading place. A little boy soon came to bless the union of Arthur and Edith, and Harry and Nellie were equally proud of a pretty little girl; but three years passed and they heard nothing from Gadong Beg. But one evening as they had all met at Harry's villa and were sitting on the lawn, an individual came rolling up the walk with a gait which was purely nautical, and gave them a jolly hail.

"All you Tokios, ahoy! shipmates, how goes it?"

Nellie sprung up and hugged him on the spot, for she recognized the Yankee Rajah. The rest were not slow to follow suit.

"Seems to me this ar' climate is trying to the eyes," whimpered Saul, brushing away suspicious moisture from his eyes. "Glad to see the old man, hey? Waal, I rather kalkilated to surprise you, and I reckon I hev."

"Did you come alone?"

"I kalkilate not. Tom Reid and Marco ar' down to the tavern, but I didn't reckon—"

"Where's that coachman?" cried Harry. "Here, Mike, drive down to Haster's and get a gentleman named Reid, who is stopping there. There is another man with him, a dark-colored man—"

"A naygur?" demanded Mike.

"See here, you critter," shouted the Rajah, "don't you call Marco names or I'll mount you like a typhoon."

"Don't stop to ask questions, Mike," said Harry. "Bring them up here, and tell Haster to send their luggage and that of Captain Belton up here at once."

The coachman drove off and was soon back, bringing Tom Reid and Marco, who were cordially received by all. Reid had changed little, except that the desperate air he had once worn was gone, and in its place a look of manly self-reliance. But they knew from Saul Belton that he was completely changed, and was now his right-hand man, and captain of the felucca, which had been taken from Richard Manton. There had been little use for the Mystery, as the Malay pirates had been completely cowed, and would run at the sight of the Rajah's flag.

"We've only come for six months, mates," said Belton, "and then we'll go back to kinder civilize the Malays some more. Mout be the world will hear of the Yankee Rajah yit."

The party were lions while they remained, and either Saul or Tom might have taken a wife home with them, had they cared to do so, but they went back alone. Saul only too glad to escape from certain fair ladies, who were dazzled by the splendor of his jewels. And they sailed away again into the far East, where their lives were spent. Their adventures were many, but we have not space to set them down. It is enough that they lived useful lives and Tom Reid never forgot that Edith Carrington had saved him from his own evil head, and although he loved her while he lived, it was with a chastened affection, and he was not unhappy, as he considered her loss part of his atonement. But none of them ever forgot those perilous hours passed amid the islands of the China seas, and had a kind thought even for the unhappy man who was known as the Black Shereef, and who died by Marco's hand.

THE END.

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